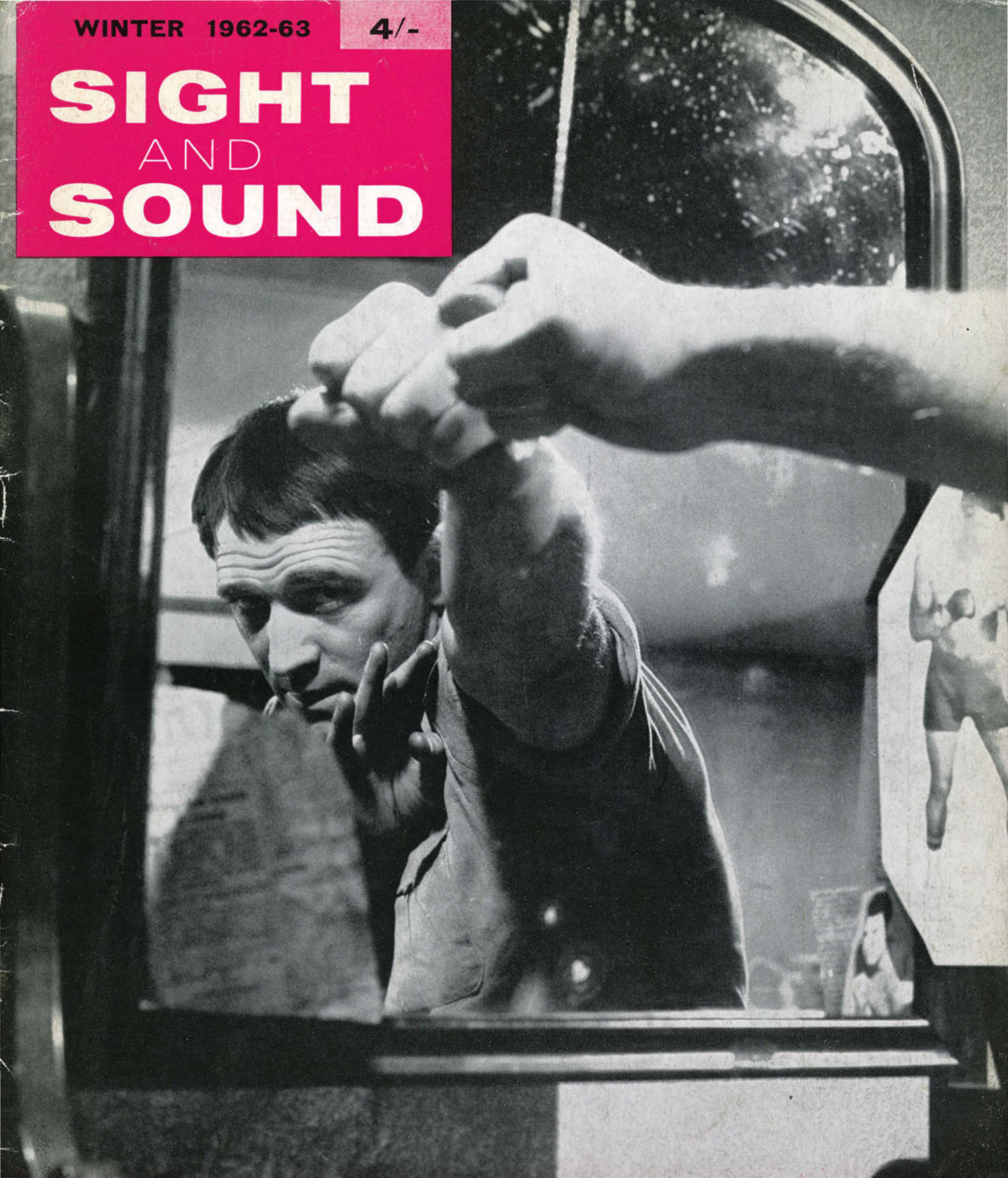


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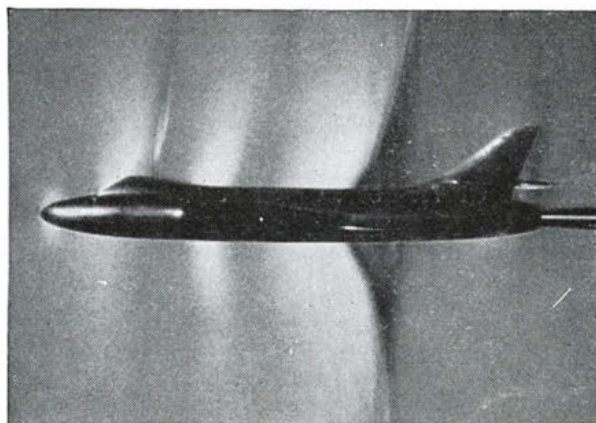
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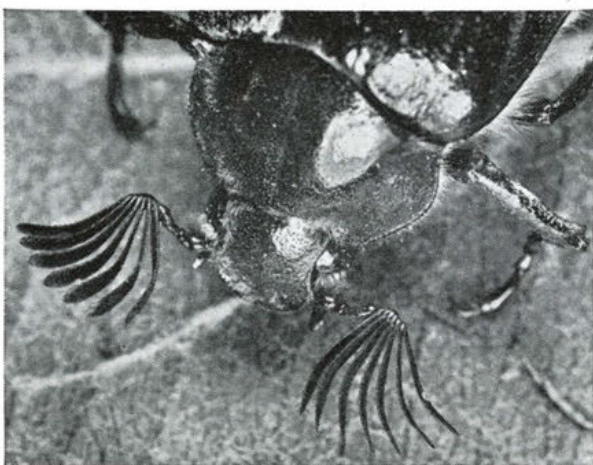




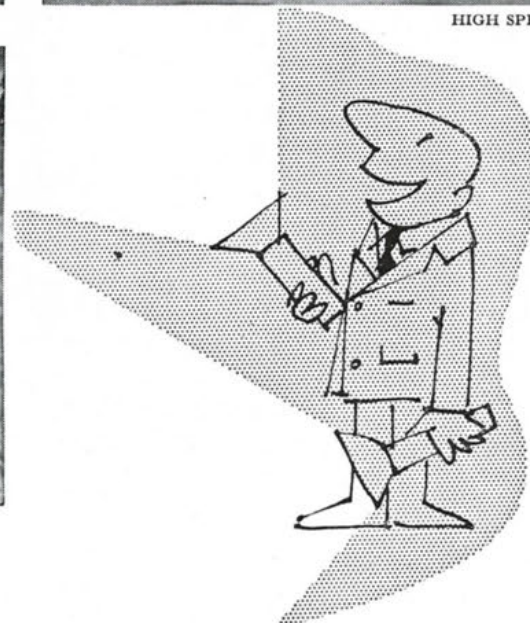
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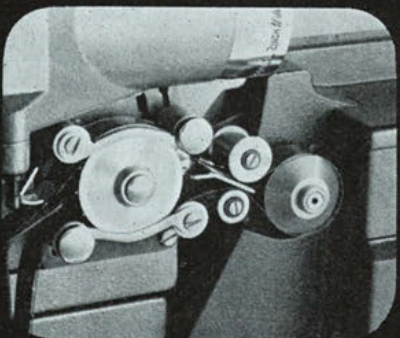
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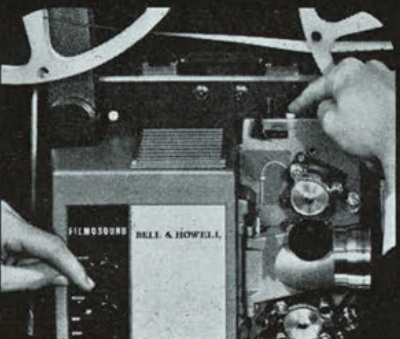
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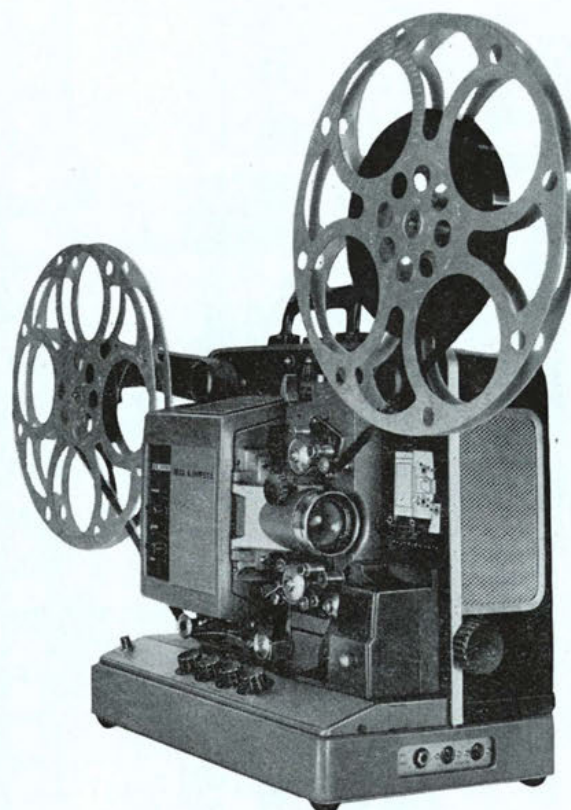


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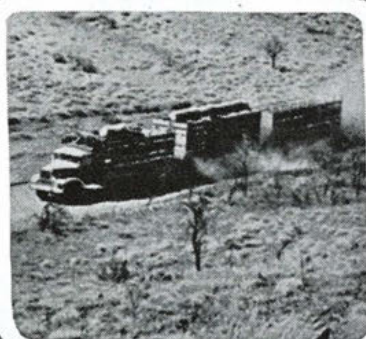
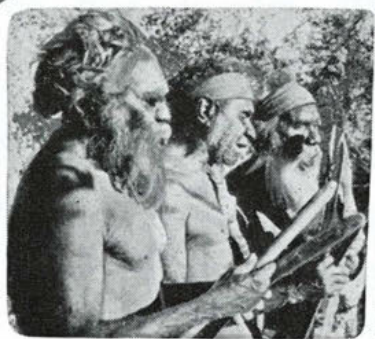
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# THE FRONT PAGE / 1962

**JANUARY**—Year opens with gloomy box-office statistics for 1961, revealing an 11 per cent drop in U.K. cinema admissions compared with 1960; and news of the closing down of three big Paris cinemas. In London, however, Peter Sellers' *Only Two Can Play* fills two cinemas, with special buses ferrying audiences between them. *La Notte* arrives at the Academy, to a predictable critical response (Mrs. Gilliatt anti; Miss Powell pro; several don't know). Nat Cohen acquires the Arts Theatre. Grimsby Town Council rejects a proposal that local film censorship should be the responsibility of the full council instead of, as now, the Fire Brigade Committee.

**FEBRUARY**—The Curzon puts on the year's best double bill (Olmi's *Il Posto* and Wajda's *Innocent Sorcerers*), and *L'Année Dernière* splits the critics yet again. But the public, Josh Billings later reports in the *Kine Weekly*, "are turning up time and time again in the hope of figuring out the freak romantic melodrama." Wilder's *One, Two, Three* brings back Cagney, fairly bursting with vitality, and *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* a quietist Vivien Leigh. Ichikawa's *Fires on the Plain* gets jeers from an audience hoping for more than tragedy (even with cannibalism) from a club cinema. *West Side Story* is shown to the Queen; from the U.S. comes news that the rights to *My Fair Lady* have changed hands for a record \$5 million.

**MARCH**—Josh Billings wonders whether Peter Sellers, currently visible in six films, new and old, isn't over-taxing his market. The Boulting Brothers, who have claimed that they shouldn't be required to function simultaneously as employers and trade unionists, lose their action against the ACTT but win sympathy from the judge. *Ugetsu Monogatari* opens to a very luke-warm press. What more did the critics want?

**APRIL**—Budget month. "People outside the cinema industry, such as the Chancellor," *Kine Weekly* complains, "are blissfully unaware of the problems of increasing the price of, say, an ice cream from 6d. to 7d. It is well known that giving small change in auditorium sales is a time-waster." Also *Viridiana* month, with everyone at last in agreement about a masterpiece. John Schlesinger happily negotiates the leap from *Monitor* to Anglo Amalgamated with *A Kind of Loving*. *West Side Story* collars ten Oscars; less single-minded, the British Film Academy splits its top award between *The Hustler* and *Ballad of a Soldier*.

**MAY**—Film of the month: *Jules et Jim*, with Truffaut and Jeanne Moreau splendidly paired; *Jalsaghar* and *The Lady with the Little Dog* shine at the Academy. At Cannes, the jury passes over Buñuel, Bresson and Antonioni ("in my opinion, developing into an unhealthy cult in the cinema," says *Kine Weekly* reporter of the latter) to let a rank outsider in Brazil's *The Promise* snatch the prize. Angry pressmen complain they haven't even seen the winner. Geraldine Page (*Summer and Smoke*, *Sweet Bird of Youth*) seems to be all over the place, looking a very considerable actress. Carl Foreman tells the industry it should support a national film school.

**JUNE**—The Pilkington Report—throwing not much further light on the all-the-year-round topic of Pay TV. J. Lee Thompson clashes with the censor: he claims 161 cuts have been demanded in *Cape Fear*; the Board counters that by its method of reckoning only 15 have been asked for. M. Rottenburg, director general of Pathé in Belgium, complains that eight out of ten films by young French directors are about "nervous wrecks or unbalanced sex maniacs," which cuts down on family visits to the cinema. His plea for more suitable

proportions: two out of ten. Sam Peckinpah, bright new director from TV, makes a double-barrelled arrival with *Guns in the Afternoon* and *The Deadly Companions*. *Paris Nous Appartient* takes the beating of the year from the critics.

**JULY**—Darryl Zanuck returns as president to a hard-hit 20th Century-Fox, who expect to be \$25 million down on this year's operations. Here the Federation of British Film Makers, worried by "monopolistic tendencies," suggest a government enquiry into the industry. Summer doldrums in the cinema, with Robert Preston's finger-snapping *Music Man* the brightest thing in sight. Jerry Wald, independent film-maker at Fox and one of America's most literary-minded producers (Faulkner, Lawrence) dies in Hollywood.

**AUGUST**—Strong rivalry between *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Glynis Johns in the madhouse) and *Mix Me a Person* (Anne Baxter in the deep freeze) for title of year's most far-fetched movie. Rotha's *Life of Adolf Hitler* turns up as late night entertainment at the Academy—and runs. Jeanne Moreau joins troupe of stars commuting from the Continent for *The Victors*. First issue of *Movie*, new magazine from former *Oxford Opinion* writers, which Dilys Powell finds "mesmerising". So do we. Marilyn Monroe's death eclipses the gaiety of nations.

**SEPTEMBER**—Biggest hit of Venice Festival turns out to be retrospective of the American Twenties; but Welles' keenly awaited *The Trial* never turns up at all. Great month for actors, with Mason in *Lolita* (so much better than American reviews hinted as to suggest some sea-change in mid-Atlantic), Laughton in *Advise and Consent*, Courtenay in *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, Citti in *Accattone*. The Bounty sails into the Pool of London; in Paris fireworks from the Eiffel Tower launch *The Longest Day*.

**OCTOBER**—London Festival opens with *Caporal Epinglé*; continues to usual packed houses, despite increasing difficulty of locating NFT in the L.C.C. building site. Spyros Skouras announces that *Cleopatra* is now likely to cost \$40 million, but will be worth it. Lord Rank retires, and the Odeon, Leicester Square, commemorates its 25th birthday with Betty Box's *The Wild and the Willing*. Blockbusters—*The Longest Day*, *How the West Was Won*, *Porgy and Bess*—sprout thick and fast, while *Dr. No* brings queues back to the suburbs. Star performance: Lilli Palmer, looking better than ever playing innumerable variations on herself in Leenhardt's *Rendezvous at Midnight*. News belatedly reaches London of the death of Tod Browning, famous horror film-maker who directed, in *Freaks*, the film everyone has heard of and no one has seen.

**NOVEMBER**—John Frankenheimer's third film in six months is also his best: *The Manchurian Candidate*, the American and unAmerican film of the year. Great beginning by Agnès Varda with *Cléo*; no one seems quite sure what to make of Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly*, which leaves London only two Bergmans behind chronologically. Robert Aldrich tells *The Times* that if Bette Davis and Joan Crawford "didn't exactly become the best of friends" on *Baby Jane*, "at least they complained individually to me and behaved with perfect politeness to each other." We go to press with Lawrence of Arabia inescapable on TV and radio, though not as yet visible on the screen.

FILMS OF THE YEAR: *La Notte*, *Il Posto*, *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, *Ugetsu Monogatari*, *Viridiana*, *The Lady with the Little Dog*, *Jalsaghar*, *Jules et Jim*, *Paris Nous Appartient*, *Lolita*, *Le Caporal Epinglé*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Vivre sa Vie*. And, from the London Festival, *The Exterminating Angel*, *Knife in the Water*, *Il Mare*, *Early Autumn*.

Opposite page: Jacques Demy rehearses a scene for his new film, "Baie des Anges" with a blonde Jeanne Moreau.



# AMERICAN DIARY / LOUIS MARCORELLES



IN A WAY, THE GREATEST movie of them all is America itself. Three months spent in travelling through the United States last summer soon eclipsed the web of dreams and fancies which I had built up around this huge country since, at the age of twelve, my imagination took delighted wing in the wake of Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable along the highways of *It Happened One Night*.

Today the great cinema of Capra, Vidor, McCarey, belongs to history. But America remains, with its frenzied pursuit of happiness, its racial problems, its economic tensions, its prodigious energies. Another cinema, another day, will chronicle this great adventure.

## HARVARD

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH AN AMERICAN CINEMA. One July morning I go to the Boston Paramount to see what Howard Hawks looks like on his own side of the Atlantic: *Hatari!*, two hours and forty minutes of it, with John Wayne and Elsa Martinelli, Chabrol's star Gérard Blain, speaking an odd sort of English, and Rohmer's star, the delicious Michèle Girardon. Is Hawks, perhaps, paying off a debt to *Cahiers du Cinéma*? The real spectacle, though, is in the auditorium, where the kids settle down in their seats with huge bags of popcorn and, as the film progresses, dash out into the foyer to renew their stocks, while other spectators stroll out for a cigarette or a visit to the elliptically-styled "Restrooms".

Hawks, I realise, has made the ideal film for such an audience. *Hatari!* can be seen in slices: you go out for fifteen minutes, come back for the next fifteen, and still follow the plot perfectly, because there isn't any. The cinema is first and foremost a spectacle, which must be able to speak directly to each and every spectator. In just the same way, in the streets of America you can read the destiny of each citizen like an open book, provided you keep your eyes wide open. America seems to have been created for the cinema, and the cinema to describe America.

The cinemas of Boston and its sister city, Cambridge, surprise me by the indifferent quality of their projection. The sound is often indistinct, the focusing poor. CinemaScope is nibbled away at the edges, always assuming that anyone has even bothered to try to project it correctly. One day I watch the trailer for a CinemaScope film on a standard screen. Nobody complains. And these are first-run cinemas, the admission price ranging from \$1.65 to \$2.00; with one or two exceptions, the auditoriums are as decrepit and unappetising as they could possibly be. I run across similar conditions in other cities. It's easy to understand why the public prefers to stay in front of its television screens.

One evening I create a minor scandal at Harvard by showing Alain Resnais' *Nuit et Brouillard* to illustrate a short lecture on the Nouvelle Vague at the University's International Forum. I try to explain how the film relates to the body of Resnais' work, and that Resnais himself prefers it to his features. Part of the audience is overwhelmed, the rest outraged: how dare one show such a film seventeen years after

*Snapshots of Hollywood. Above: Louis Marcorelles sits on the pavement of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Centre: part of the Fox lot at Westwood Hills, cleared for rebuilding and the site of a new housing development, Century City. Left: main entrance to the Hollywood Cemetery.*



the end of the war? Isn't it time everything was forgotten? Suddenly, in retrospect, Resnais' work takes on its full meaning.

## MONTREAL

A LONG WEEKEND IN McLAREN and National Film Board country, on the occasion of the Montreal Festival, discovering an atmosphere which is neither American nor European. I am unprepared for a Gallic America, where the American-style signs are all written in the language of Malherbe. Surprised to find European films projected, excellently this time, in a gigantic, very American cinema—Loew's, brother of all the United States and South American Loew's. More surprise on hearing everybody speaking an often incomprehensible French.

Most interesting, obviously, is my visit to the National Film Board, a veritable factory for producing shorts and documentaries of all sorts. I spot McLaren prowling in the corridors. Here there are two distinct groups: the French-speaking and the English. The English make more films; the French concentrate on quality. But there is no strict segregation. Guy Coté, for example, French Canadian, works exclusively with the English group. He shows me a film about children which he has just finished, greatly influenced by *Thursday's Children*.

During one morning, I watch recently completed films in the Board's viewing theatre. Afterwards, with the French group under the leadership of Pierre Junot, we discuss Canadian cinema over an excellent meal in one of those taverns from which women are strictly barred. I had seen *Jour après Jour*, a film clearly influenced in its montage by the Resnais school. Describing the world of a paper factory, it is edited in a very concise rhythm with a somewhat "Nouveau Roman" commentary counterpointing the images: deliberately stripped and banal. The film seems to me remarkable, once granted the principle of literary cinema as exemplified by Agnès Varda and Resnais. I also saw *Lonely Boy*, by Wolf König and Roman Kroitor, about the young pop singer Paul Anka. The directors have used an odd mixture of Free Cinema—candid camera at the service of social comment—and the newer methods of Richard Leacock, with the camera almost literally glued to the principal character. Some excellent moments with the fans hysterically screaming over their idol do not conceal the opportunism of the enterprise, which never really gets beyond the picturesque.

Richard Leacock's name crops up frequently in Montreal, usually with some reservations attached. Guy Coté and Claude Jutra, while acknowledging his technical mastery, criticise the unfinished element in his work. It is not "artistic" enough. Nobody in Canada is seriously thinking about features yet, except Jutra who, with 30,000 Canadian dollars and complete independence, is making his first feature, with the Haitian actress Johanne Harrelle in the leading role.

## NEW YORK

I ARRIVE IN NEW YORK ONE FRIDAY evening at 5 o'clock, just as the streets are beginning to swarm with people rushing home for the weekend. As I emerge from Grand Central Station into 42nd Street, I am prepared to be surprised: even so, it is staggering. This is city life on a new scale, where the apéritif and the nice cup of tea have no place. . . . The heat is torrid, and the atmosphere so humid that one can almost seize the air in handfuls.

My first meeting with Richard Leacock, who lives near Greenwich Village in a modest apartment without the usual air-conditioning. The winter before last, three films which he made in collaboration with Robert Drew and other members of Drew Associates were shown in Paris in a small Left Bank cinema. Financial backing comes from Time Inc., and the



Robert Drew and Richard Leacock in their cutting-room.

company does not expect to be commercially under way until 1963. Then, it is hoped, enough films will have been made to tempt a buyer for a TV series. The aim of Drew (formerly a journalist on *Life*), Leacock (cameraman on *Louisiana Story*) and their colleague D. A. Pennebaker, is to create a new form of filmed journalism. Selecting a subject with sufficient dramatic possibilities, they use light cameras with synchronous sound, the synchronisation being assured by electronic watches which are accurate to a quarter of a second over 24 hours. As much footage as possible is shot, and during the editing—in which everyone connected with the film collaborates—the material is tightened and given shape.

The limitation of this method is that the wide-angle lenses sometimes used may distort the image, the camera often wobbles, and the direct recording of sound usually reproduces badly. At worst, the result is a technical performance rather than a real film—as with *Sunday*, for example, Dan Drasin's film about a protest meeting in Washington Square, where everything wobbles all the time; or, on a higher level, with *Football*, made by Claude Fournier (from the National Film Board) and on which Drew and Leacock collaborated. *Football* comes close to pure virtuosity: any attempt at structure has gone, leaving only shreds of intensely real dialogue. Is this enough to make a film? Yet in *Eddie and Primary* one glimpses another cinema which, by trapping a man's ambitions, his day to day progress in life, his struggle to survive and get on (the notion of competition is at the heart of the Drew-Leacock team's most characteristic successes), affords us new insight into the individual and his most private motivations.

Certain acting conventions instantly seem as outmoded as the Comédie Française or the stiff-upper-lip style of the British cinema before 1959. The revolution could be as important to the future of the cinema as Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble, or to a lesser extent Lee Strasberg and the Actors' Studio, were to the theatre. Truth no longer lies in seeming to give a "good performance", a star turn, but in seizing the individual unawares, rather as you may discover the real face of a woman in the early morning on the pillow beside you. The camera which captures people in their natural habitat, situating them exactly by means of synchronised sound and image, has made unacceptable much that used to be taken for granted.



I feel this when I go with Leacock to see John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. Unlike many critics, I do not feel that this will rank among his more important films. Ford has clearly thrown the film together from an excellent script. But I am chiefly struck by the stereotyped acting of the two stars, John Wayne and James Stewart, and the extreme unreality of the decor: a scene in which a stagecoach is attacked has even been filmed in a studio. In a Drury Lane musical it might all go down well, but it's difficult to accept this inverted sophistication in the age of Rouch, Cassavetes and Leacock.

An instinctive sort of person, Leacock works as he does not because of some text-book principles but because he learned his job under Flaherty, the "great old man", as he likes to call him, and so for him cinema can never be canned theatre, still less canned literature. The character who lives on the screen must preserve his autonomy, possess his entire physical and spiritual personality (unless, as with Mizoguchi and the later Eisenstein, one goes to the other extreme of stylised acting). I do not, however, understand Leacock's reticence about John Cassavetes' experiments in *Shadows* and *Too Late Blues*. No matter how inconclusive and imperfect, they were at least one way of helping to shatter the pseudo-realistic conventions of Hollywood. And Leacock, moreover, himself dabbled in theatre at one time, when he was a student at Harvard with Leonard Bernstein. He is very conscious of the limitations of his own method; which, at its best, presents fragments of exceptional intensity, but which rarely manages to sustain a character for any length of time.



A shot from the Drew-Leacock documentary "Football".

Later, while Leacock is away from New York, I manage to see the film he made last winter in India. The hero, so to speak, is President Nehru. Leacock, Claude Fournier and a third collaborator observed Nehru daily, at work in his office, when he went out, and, particularly, on an election campaign tour. Leacock himself, camera in hand, followed Nehru about a village, filming from behind the open car in which he travelled, then spying on him, still from behind, as he addressed the crowd from a platform. The success of a sequence such as this lies in the unique way in which Nehru's words and gestures, and the corresponding reactions of the crowd, have been shot. Here the task of the cameraman becomes comparable to that of a painter with his brush: everything is in the movement, and the movement only has meaning if it is completely in touch with the mood and movement of the subject. Out of this extraordinary sequence comes a portrait of the statesman as at once an old and tired man, a demagogue caught in the fire of an election campaign, and a demi-god, transfigured by the eyes of the crowd.

A brilliantly successful sequence such as this differs from

work along similar lines—Free Cinema, Rouch, some of the better television documentaries—in that the major role devolves upon the photography, the film being in a sense edited as it is shot. At this point cinema has nothing to do with literature (Resnais, some of Godard), theatre (Kazan, Preminger), or the plastic arts (Antonioni, Minnelli); and this, to me, is the importance of Leacock's work at its best. But its failures are no less evident. The Nehru film, as I saw it in rough cut, lasts for fifty-five minutes, or about twice as long as the matter warrants. The remainder is simply respectable documentary. Elsewhere, a weakness in the elaboration of what one must call the scenario—the general development of the subject matter—can result in the same failure. I am thinking particularly of *Pete and Johnnie*, which deals with the rehabilitation of a Harlem juvenile delinquent by a coloured social worker. Details catch the tense life of Harlem, but an added commentary and stereotyped conclusion almost belie the violence of the images.

Echoing Lindsay Anderson's "Cinema is absolutely impossible," Leacock likes to say, more modestly, "Cinema is terribly difficult." The quest for absolute reality which his technique assumes mercilessly shows up any trickery in the scenario—or rather the subject. But sooner or later the element of "myth-making" in the films will have to be admitted for what it is—one way, among others, of creating fiction. Once it has been acknowledged that objective cinema cannot exist, the value of the Drew-Leacock methods will emerge more clearly. By bringing us closer to people, they will have shown us that there are more profound, more secret truths than either theatre or literature knew of, and on which the cinema will be able to draw to dig still deeper.

One eagerly awaits the next films from Drew Associates: one about Jane Fonda and the staging of a Broadway play; *The Chair*, about Paul Crump, the Chicago Negro who was sentenced to the electric chair and whose sentence was commuted at the last moment to life imprisonment in solitary confinement. An important and ambitious film is just being finished by Albert and David Maysles, who were responsible for some of the best scenes in early Drew-Leacock films such as *Yankee No* and *Primary* (notably the famous tracking shot with the camera held at arm's length accompanying Senator Kennedy through a sea of people at an election meeting). Before the last Cannes Festival, the Maysles brothers followed (with his consent) the producer Joe Levine—latest mogul *à la mode*, born in the slums of Boston, now a millionaire—going about his various activities, at home with his family, taking part in a discussion on television, signing a contract. The aim is to assemble the maximum amount of documentation; the ideal, apparently, would be to arrive at a portrait of the American Businessman, a classic product of the American system and yet a man and an individual. The stake is high. As always the montage will play a major role. If successful, the film could mark an important date in the history of the "cinema-document," of which Leacock will always remain incontestably an initiator.

## THE SOUTH

A SHORT VISIT TO TWO CITIES of the Deep South, Charleston and New Orleans. Coloured people are forbidden to enter any cinema other than those set aside for their race. Charleston is famous not only for its delightful old quarters, its dance, *Porgy and Bess* and the Civil War, but for being one of the few places which still reject desegregation in the schools. The situation, so far as the cinema is concerned, is no better in New Orleans, or in Dallas, at the gates of the West.

In the streets you meet many more coloured people than white. In the cinemas you see only white faces. There is a cinema for coloured people, charging 35 cents instead of \$1.65, where a double bill is playing including a Raoul Walsh film I haven't seen. But I am advised not to go there, because there is no air conditioning, and anyway white people just





Another supermarket rises on the site of D. W. Griffith's old studio at the corner of Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards.

don't. *Raisin in the Sun* doesn't get shown to white audiences in the South, though a coloured cinema in New Orleans screens it. As everywhere in the States, everyone talks to me about *Jules et Jim*, *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* and *A Taste of Honey*.

Are directors like Truffaut, Resnais and Richardson aware of the role they might play by insisting that their films should be available to all spectators, of all colours? I talk the matter over with John Rosenfield, film critic of the *Dallas News* for over thirty years. He accepts segregation ("I, as a Jew, am refused entry to certain clubs"); he adores *Marienbad*, but he certainly cannot see how a Negro could possibly get to Resnais' film. And in Hollywood no Negro has ever directed a film. Any change will take a long time.

## SAN FRANCISCO

SHORT STOP OVER AT SAN FRANCISCO, a Hitchcockian pilgrimage in the wake of *Vertigo*. At a soirée with the *Film Quarterly* team, I meet Stan Brakhage, arch-priest of American avant-gardism, who has just moved to San Francisco from Denver. He joins us at ten o'clock in the evening, with his wife and three barefoot children ("like real Colorado natives," Brakhage explains). He shows me the prelude to his projected four-hour masterpiece, and an earlier film of his wife giving birth to their first child—not exactly a scientific film, but a mixture of documentary fact and aesthetic interpretation of reality, rather obscene, and to me, indefensible. His "prelude", a shapeless mixture of McLaren scratchings and documentary on nature, requires (as he points out in his theoretical writings) that the spectator should be capable of perceiving and retaining in his memory each of the 24 frames which make up one second of projection.

To earn his living Brakhage makes short films with "normal" subjects and stories. I am able to see two of these "commercial" films which he made in Denver: *Colorado Legend*, which has a Negro ballad as commentary to the action, and a curious science-fiction fantasy on the circulation of the blood. Made in 16mm. and colour, these two films are, according to Brakhage, "more or less intelligible to the average six-year-old adult mind." Here, tied down by a precise subject-line, Brakhage's work is notable not so much for the rather conventional camera-movement, but for the extraordinary

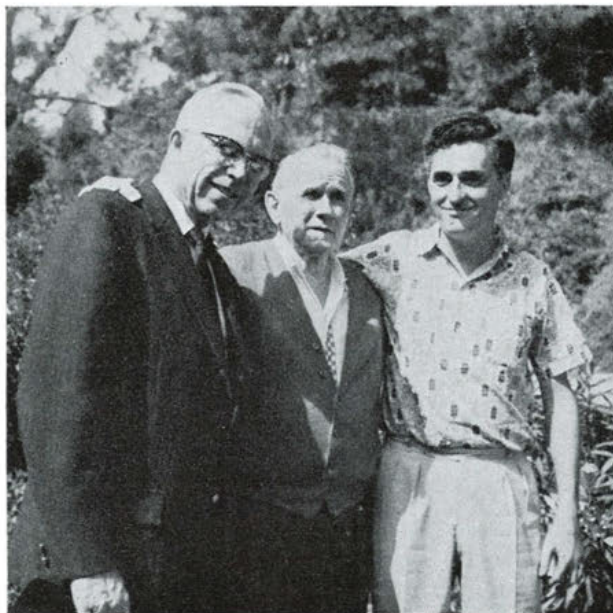
plastic beauty which he manages to confer on a pioneer's cabin, or on the organs which he films in his imaginary voyage through the human body. Brakhage has a painter's eye, thinks like a painter and dreams of liberating painting through the cinema, creating what he calls "painting in action". Brakhage is unshakably convinced of his own genius, and his vanity can be formidable. He thought for a time, on reading reviews before he had seen the film, that Resnais had copied his methods in *Marienbad*. He believes that he inspired Cassavetes in *Shadows*. The only debts he recognises are to the later Eisenstein, and to Leacock. One may laugh at Brakhage. I think he may grow up and become someone. He is only 30 now.

## HOLLYWOOD

HOLLYWOOD TODAY IS ONLY ONE AMONG a host of suburbs in that tentacular city, Los Angeles. For anyone setting out from the East to make a day to day discovery of America, a kind of exaltation goes with the idea of California—the most dynamic state of the Union, whose population, we are told, will soon overtake New York's, if it hasn't already done so. *Look* has just devoted a whole issue to California. But among all the wealth of singing praise, among all the tantalising photographs, appears not one word, as far as I can see, about the wonderland of Hollywood, not one reference to the efforts, past, present or future, of the cinema's capital city. Hollywood, it seems, doesn't count any more.

In four parallel lanes, at speeds ranging from forty to eighty miles an hour, cars, buses and trucks jostle each other on the road to Los Angeles, that mushroom city where any movement from one place to another is unthinkable except by car. The old city of Los Angeles is little more than a memory now, a tiny kernel whose edges are being constantly nibbled away. Robert Florey, the French director resident in California for 41 years, meets me as I get off the bus, to guide me through the last vestiges—a street, a church—of this old city. But America flees from its past as from the plague, and with the banks, hotels and supermarkets spiring up on every street corner Los Angeles seems an American town like a dozen others, though on a Californian scale. Hollywood, contrary to my expectations, is as unobtrusive in it as the film studios are on the outskirts of Paris.

Hollywood is a thing of the past twice over. Firstly, because it knew its hour of glory between the First World War and the Wall Street crash of 1929—which already takes us back more than thirty years—when the stars lived like rajahs, when



Marc Corelles with King Vidor (left) and Tay Garnett.



Griffith and Stroheim imposed their wills on cowed financiers, when taxation was minimal. And secondly, because even the evidence of this past is mainly in ruins, if indeed it survives at all. Only a Robert Florey, veritable Proust among those cineastes who have not forgotten, could take me on a voyage of discovery of that lost greatness. A young Frenchman brought up partly in Switzerland, Florey tried his luck in the flourishing Hollywood of the Twenties. He worked regularly as a director for Paramount, Warners, Columbia, until 1950, when the crisis forced him, like so many others, into television. In forty years in Hollywood, he has seen everything and heard everything, had Scott Fitzgerald and Faulkner as his scriptwriters, co-directed *Monsieur Verdoux*, received various prizes for his films. He is one of those beings who pass unobtrusively through history, but without whose witness history would lose one of its dimensions.

Florey takes me on an expedition through Hollywood in the footsteps of Chaplin and Griffith. Newspapers still remember that Chaplin's studio was at the corner of La Brea and Sunset Boulevard; now only a tiny portion remains, the rest having long ago been transformed into a supermarket. No plaque exists to record the fact that here Chaplin finished *Limelight*, his last American film, in 1951. Even sadder is the sight of that corner of Linden Street and Glendale Avenue where once Mack Sennett's studio stood. Here the Keystone Kops rushed headlong down Linden Street on their crazy chases, exploits which seem even more remarkable in retrospect when one sees the steepness of the slope. Florey's car stops in front of a little door. "It was here," he explains, "that Chaplin entered to present himself to Mack Sennett in 1914." In the little courtyard next door, now a garage or something of the sort, two workmen stare at us. On the other side of the Boulevard, also on the hillside, was the swimming-pool where the famous bathing beauties used to frolic.

We move on to another intersection. "Hollywood and Sunset," Florey tells me; and his face clouds over . . . He had planned to show me the remains of the studio where Griffith made *Birth of a Nation*, *Intolerance*, *Broken Blossoms*, and which had been burnt down two months previously. But the last vestiges have been swept away. We shall never see even the gutted ruins of the place where Griffith wrote the first chapter in the history of the seventh art. Everything has already receded into oblivion, and once again a supermarket rises . . .

Visiting the studios, one has the same impression of glories irretrievably lost to the past, of history deliberately buried in oblivion. Universal, still enjoying considerable success with the

comedies of Cary Grant, Doris Day and Rock Hudson, has long since sold its domains to television, and lingers on as the tenant of a fragment of its former empire. Of the vast territories of 20th Century-Fox, only a section remains as the studio itself; and this is temporarily closed as far as active production is concerned. Hopes are centred mainly on *The Longest Day* and *Cleopatra*. M-G-M and Warners are still at home, thanks in part to the numerous television films being made on their lots. R.K.O. and Republic vanished long ago.

At the Universal canteen, where I lunch with Florey, television and film actors eat together. I notice Robert Armstrong, hero of *King Kong*. I might well have come across Louis Gasnier, who once directed Pearl White in *The Perils of Pauline*, and who now occasionally gets a studio call to appear as an extra in some Western. This is the sort of thing noted by everyone who writes about Hollywood, and it is perhaps an inseparable part of the Hollywood myth, where a triumph is always made at the expense of someone else's downfall. Griffith and Mack Sennett both suffered the torture of this relegation to obscurity: Griffith, who used to come to wander silently beside his former studio; Sennett, who was invited to Cannes a few years ago, not long before his death, and who could not even afford to make a detour to the Paris he wanted so much to see, and had to go straight back to California.

My time in Hollywood is limited. Rather than set out on an unlikely quest to find brilliant new directors, I prefer to try to meet some of the great men of the Thirties. Frank Capra has just returned from Czechoslovakia, where he led the American delegation at the Karlovy Vary festival. At the office of the Motion Picture Directors Guild I am shown the report in which Capra analyses the films shown. Like a number of Hollywood directors, he is impressed by the high technical skill of the east European films. Alas, his wife's illness prevents me from meeting Capra himself. Leo McCarey, considered by Griffith to be one of the masters of the American cinema, doesn't want to be interviewed: he is afraid of some misrepresentation of the old Hollywood. Luckily, King Vidor is not so fastidious.

Early one afternoon, Florey and I reach the heights of Beverly Hills. Suddenly, at a bend in the road, I recognise King Vidor standing in front of a car, speaking to a small, white-haired man with a malicious sparkle in his eyes. It is Tay Garnett, another name from Hollywood's great past. I ask him what he is doing. "Nothing," he replies, "I'm out of work." Fortunately Garnett, like Vidor and the other major directors of the Thirties, did his main work in a period when he was able to put money aside against the future. Even so the cinema, which is a trade and a way of earning a living, is also a passion. Over two hours of rambling conversation, Vidor explains the insurmountable difficulties which mean that he is unable to work in Hollywood at the moment. His last film, *Solomon and Sheba*, was made more than three years ago. It was an enormous commercial success but Vidor doesn't like to speak of it any more, in spite of the wide-screen experience which shooting in Super Technirama 70 afforded him. He has been inundated with offers to do other biblical super-spectacles, all of which he has refused.

Two projects particularly close to his heart are a film about children, and one about a Hollywood director who sets out to rediscover the village where he was born and his early dreams. "But who can I show my script to?" he asks. "There are no responsible producers in the studios any more. I shall try to set up my film by subscriptions. Otherwise, I shall work in Europe." King Vidor, the man who in his great period so brilliantly described the conflicts and the uncertainties of the American way of life, is today almost a stranger to the cinema. In France you end up an Academician like René Clair, or a Great Sage like Renoir. Here, in Hollywood, you simply struggle to survive.



Pavement in Hollywood, emblazoned with the names of the stars.



TOM  
MILNE

# JEAN-LUC GODARD and



# VIVRE SA VIE



**B**ORN IN 1930, Godard completed five short films—*Opération Béton* (1954), *Une Femme Coquette* (1955), *Tous les Garçons s'appellent Patrick* (1957), *Charlotte et son Jules* and *Une Histoire d'Eau* (1958)—before making his phenomenally successful first feature, *A Bout de Souffle* (1959). His second film, *Le Petit Soldat* (1960), banned on political grounds (the ban has just been lifted, subject to certain cuts which Godard at present refuses to accept), was followed by *Une Femme est une Femme* (1961) and *Vivre sa Vie* (1962). At present he is working on a sketch for the three-episode *Les Plus Belles Escroqueries du Monde*, and *Les Carabiniers*,

adapted from a play by Benjamin Joppolo. Next May he starts shooting on *Pour Lucrèce* (from Giraudoux' play, known in Britain as *Duel of Angels*). Like most Nouvelle Vague directors, Godard's films have been made very cheaply, and he comments: "The dream of the Nouvelle Vague is to be able to make high budget films. *Spartacus*? Rivette should have made it, not Kubrick." Among his dream projects: *Moll Flanders*, and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, filmed with his wife, Anna Karina, in England.

The following interview was recorded when *Vivre sa Vie* was shown at the London Film Festival prior to its run at the Academy, and Godard attended the screening.



IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT THE *Nouvelle Vague* directors claim to be totally uncommitted. Leaving aside the question of political commitment, would you say that you are artistically committed?

When the *Nouvelle Vague* started, several films included scenes of wild parties, and everybody pounced on them to label the *Nouvelle Vague* as interested only in wild parties. But it was really mere chance—just as at one time Jean Gabin was a deserter or a member of the Foreign Legion in all his films, and nobody went about drawing conclusions. In any case the word “commitment” is mostly used wrongly, generally by people on the Left. One is not committed just because one makes films about the working class or about social questions; one is committed in so far as one is responsible for what one does. In the early days I felt less responsible because I was not fully aware, but now . . . yes, I am committed in that I grow more and more conscious of what I am doing and my responsibility for it.

*It seems to me that the keynote of your early films was simply the joy of making films.*

Yes, I think that's so. We were all critics before beginning to make films, and I loved all kinds of cinema—the Russians, the Americans, the neo-realists. It was the cinema which made us—or me, at least—want to make films. I knew nothing of life except through the cinema, and my first efforts were “films de cinéphile”, the work of a film-enthusiast. I mean that I didn't see things in relation to the world, to life or history, but in relation to the cinema. Now I am growing away from all that.

*Would it be true then, to say that *Vivre sa Vie* is a new departure for you?*

No, I feel rather that it's an arrival. I like to say that there are two kinds of cinema, there is Flaherty and there is Eisenstein. That is to say, there is documentary realism and there is theatre, but ultimately, at the highest level, they are one and the same. What I mean is that through documentary realism one arrives at the structure of theatre, and through theatrical imagination and fiction one arrives at the reality of life. To confirm this, take a look at the work of the great directors, how they pass by turn from realism to theatre and back again.

*Like Renoir, you mean?*

Renoir is a model example, because he not only does it supremely well, he is aware of it. From the neo-realism of *Toni* he arrived at naturalism, moved off into the theatre again, and now in television is seeking the utmost simplicity. I started, as I thought, in realism, but I now realise that *A Bout de Souffle* was made quite unconsciously on my part. I thought I knew what it was about, but now, a year or two later, I'm conscious that I had no idea. I thought it was a realistic film, but now it seems like *Alice in Wonderland*, a

completely unreal, surrealistic world. I feel, though, that with *Vivre sa Vie* I am beginning, gradually, to make more realistic films, more concrete films if you like.

*Is this the reason for the Brechtian influence in the film?*

Yes, I discovered the theatre. I wanted to do Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* but the rights were too expensive. I should have liked to do it to show the common ground between realism and theatricality. Each has its separate frontier but there are certain points at which they merge.

*Truffaut once said that if the public did not like a film of his then he considered that it was a failure. Do you feel that *Une Femme est une Femme* is a failure because it did not attract the public?*

No, I don't think so, because a certain number of people liked it. You must remember that Truffaut is half producer, half director—in the morning he is a business man, in the afternoon an artist—and so this question of the public is more pressing for him. I think one must aim to attract the widest possible audience, but obviously this will be smaller for *Vivre sa Vie* or *Paris Nous Appartient* than for *Ben-Hur*. One must be sincere, believe that one is working for the public, and aim at them. In my early days I never asked myself whether the audience would understand what I was doing, but now I do. If Hitchcock, for example, thinks that people will not understand something, he will not do it. At the same time I feel that one must sometimes just go ahead—light may always dawn in a few years time. But of course one must be sure one knows what one is about, because if one just goes ahead and does something, saying “They won't understand but it won't matter,” one may be disastrously wrong and find that it does matter.

*I brought this up because the opening scene of *Vivre sa Vie* seems to me to be a bold directorial conception which stands a strong chance of being misunderstood.*

Perhaps, but I think that as soon as people see something a little unusual on the screen they try too hard to understand. They understand perfectly well, really, but they want to understand even more. If you show them someone drinking tea or saying goodbye, they immediately say yes, but why is he drinking tea? People didn't like *Une Femme est une Femme* because they didn't know what it meant. But it didn't mean anything. If you see a bouquet of flowers on a table, does it mean something? It doesn't prove anything about anything. I simply hoped that the film would give pleasure. I meant it to be contradictory, juxtaposing things which didn't necessarily go together, a film which was gay and sad at the same time. One can't do that, of course, one must be either one or the other, but I wanted to be both at once.

*Do you consider the editing of your films important?*

For me there are three equally important moments in making a film—before, during, and after the actual filming. With somebody like Hitchcock everything is calculated down to the last second, and so the editing is less important. *A Bout de Souffle* owes a great deal to the montage. It is a film in three movements, the first half-hour fast, the second *moderato*, and the third *allegro vivace* again: I thought of the film this way before actually beginning shooting, but in a rather vague way. *Vivre sa Vie*, on the other hand, owes very little to the editing, as it is really a collection of shots placed side by side, each one of which should be self-sufficient. The curious thing is that I think the film looks carefully constructed, whereas I made it extremely rapidly, almost as if I were writing an article without going back to make any corrections. I wanted to make the film like this, without shooting a scene

“*Vivre sa Vie*”: Anna Karina and Gilles Quéant.







"Vivre sa Vie": the shooting of Nana.

and then trying it in another way, although one or two scenes were re-shot. But I somehow felt that I had to find out right away what I wanted to do and do it, and that if it was going to be good it would be good first time. *Vivre sa Vie* is a realistic film, and at the same time extremely unrealistic. It is very schematic: a few bold lines, a few fundamental principles. I was thinking, in a way, as a painter, of confronting my characters head on as in the paintings of Matisse or Braque, so the camera is always upright.

*Long shots and elaborate camera angles are always rare in your films. Is this perhaps because your point of departure is always a character, and you like to keep close to him?*

Perhaps—as a general rule I like to use medium shots, possibly because long shots are more difficult. Certainly close shots are more moving, if they are good. One might say Rossellini's failure is that the principal feature and beauty of his films is that they are shot from remote distances: he probably shoots them like this on the assumption that his underlying conception is the most important thing, but people seen from a distance are rarely very moving. I have always traced a character's history from an emotional point of view, trying to make the audience understand and become involved with him. *Les Carabiniers* will be my first film to deal with a group of people rather than an individual.

*What exactly is the role of improvisation in your work?*

Strictly speaking it's wrong to say that I use improvisation, except in so far as I always work at the last minute. I always use a written text, though it may often be written only two or three minutes before shooting. My actors never improvised, in the Actors' Studio sense, in *A Bout de Souffle*, though they did a little in *Une Femme est une Femme*. Usually the lines are

written at the very last minute, which means that the actors have no time to prepare. I prefer this, because I am not a director of actors like Renoir or Cukor, who can rehearse an actor over and over until he manages to coax out a good performance. I like to sneak up on an actor from behind, leaving him to fend for himself, following his groping movements in the part, trying to seize on the sudden, unexpected, good moment which crops up spontaneously; and so gradually I build up an idea of what I am trying to do myself. With *Vivre sa Vie*, for example, I started with the idea that it was to begin where *A Bout de Souffle* left off. Patricia, in *A Bout de Souffle*, is a girl whom we see, as it were, from behind, and who faces us fully for one brief instant. So I knew that *Vivre sa Vie* was to start with a girl seen from behind—I did not know why. It was the only idea I had, and I couldn't tell Anna much, so she cast about without knowing what I wanted, while I tried to work out my conception. We certainly improvised in the sense that I changed my mind all the time, deciding to do this, then that.

*Why are you interested in doing Pour Lucrèce? I should have thought that Giraudoux' style was a little too mandarin for you.*

I have always wanted to do a classical play—classical in the French sense, that is, as I consider Giraudoux to be. The cinema is always talked about from the point of view of the images, and at the moment I find myself more interested in the sound. I want to carry this interest to its logical conclusion and simply direct a voice on the screen, show someone more or less motionless on the screen speaking a fine text. At the beginning of the film, perhaps, there will be the camera and the actors taking up their positions with their scripts, beside a chair or in a garden, and then beginning to read. You will



see them reading their lines, until gradually we will have moved *inside* the play and the scripts will no longer be seen. The beauty of the cinema is that, whereas in the theatre if someone dies, at the end he must get up and one does not really believe it, in the cinema one can indicate that it is only an actor, but at the same time one can believe in his death because the cinema is real, it films reality. So, starting from theatre one can move into reality. And another thing that interests me about the play is that it is about purity. It is about a woman who believes that she is Lucretia, and the end of the film will consist of Giraudoux' words: "Purity is not of this world, but once in ten years its light shines briefly." For me it will be as if I had filmed the brief glow of this light: the whole world is impure, but there will be a film which represents purity.

*Have you any idea what you want to do next, in the sense of how you would like to develop as a director?*

In a way I have had enough. I have made four films in three years and I am tired. I would like to pause for a while. What worries me is that I find I am no longer thinking in terms of cinema, but I don't know whether this is a good or a bad thing. When I was making *A Bout de Souffle* or my earlier shorts, a shot of Seberg would be made from a purely "cinematic" point of view, making sure that her head was just at the right cinematic angle, and so on. Now I just do things without worrying how they will appear cinematically. I really don't know whether this is a good thing or not.

**T**O CLEAR THE GROUND, let me state at once that I consider *Vivre sa Vie* to be not only Godard's most mature and most personal film, but also something of a masterpiece. The full range of the cinematic vocabulary which he spread out in his earlier films with the vivid and random excitement of a child learning to talk is here applied with a rigorous economy and exactness which show his complete and imaginative mastery of the medium, together with a new element of repose. A meditation on the nature of existence, *Vivre sa Vie* reduces the rôle of movement in camera and montage to a minimum as it contemplates its heroine, living her life in the cafés, streets and hotel rooms which make up her world, in a collection of scenes seemingly set in loose juxtaposition, but actually so carefully placed that each is one detail in a single, splendid canvas. The purity of the film is marred, in fact, by only two tiny flaws: a brief staccato pan shot, used gratuitously to simulate machine-gun fire; and the use of subtitles\* instead of dialogue for a few exchanges in the last scene.

Like *A Bout de Souffle* (dedicated to Monogram Pictures), *Vivre sa Vie* ("dedié aux films de série B") has a thriller-novelette basis—the story of Nana, a girl who leaves her husband and child, turns to casual prostitution, meets a pimp and becomes a professional, cheats by falling in love, is traded by her pimp to some shady characters, and killed when a quarrel flares up over the deal. But where it is possible to appreciate *A Bout de Souffle* unexactly on a "B" film plane, as an excitingly told tale, I doubt whether anyone could, or would, sit through *Vivre sa Vie* on this level. Although the value and originality of *A Bout de Souffle* lies in its thick texture and its flashes below the surface, its real meat is the exterior story of a young man determined to fulfil the exhortation "live dangerously to the end." In *Vivre sa Vie*, on the other hand, this exterior is simply a shell to be peeled away; and the shell is necessary only in so far as it encloses what (for want of a better word) one might call the soul.

\*Of this use of subtitles, Godard says: "It was an idea I had during the editing stage. I thought the scene wasn't good. I meant it to be acted, and it didn't give that feeling at all. So I thought of distancing it a little, of giving it a sort of 'postcard' feeling by means of the subtitles."

Hence the Brechtian structure of the film, which is divided into twelve distinct chapters, each preceded by a title summarising the characters and main action to follow. By this means attention is drawn away from the dramatic progress of Nana's story, and concentrated on her reaction to each event as it occurs. Godard has thus abandoned the fast and furious pace which is an integral feature of *A Bout de Souffle* and the "B" feature genre (and, incidentally, of *Une Femme est une Femme*), and in *Vivre sa Vie* the camera, often completely static, is allowed all the time it wants to capture a brief, revelatory moment; in fact, the camera is used, precisely and exactly, to isolate and examine each of these moments as it occurs.

The opening sequence, for example, shows Nana and Paul seated at a bar, discussing her determination to leave him. They are photographed squarely from behind, with the camera awaiting the end of the affair and moving only twice, to contemplate his back instead of hers. Nana's face can be seen dimly reflected in the mirror, but not Paul's. As the bickering discussion proceeds, Nana suddenly cries, "Why are you looking at me like that?" and the camera swings to catch, for the first time, Paul's expression; it doesn't quite, but it does catch the sudden, tenderly protective gesture of her hand as it moves into frame towards him. A small, but revealing moment. Or again, when Nana sits in the café writing her application for a job in a brothel and is interrupted by the pimp, the camera moves directly behind him, obscuring Nana and showing only the back of his head as they talk. Our attention is therefore focused on their conversation, trivial enough, until he says, "Je pense qu'il y a une grande bonté chez vous,"† when the camera swings gently to one side to seize her expression of astonishment: the movement pinpoints not only her surprise and disturbed emotion at his words, but also the unexpectedness that a pimp should have said these words, in this way, to a prostitute.

Nana, in this scene, is calmly and rationally planning to take up prostitution, and the camera suddenly uncovers a tender, private spot. It is precisely this isolation, this *trapping* of an apparently unimportant detail—done constantly throughout the film—which illuminates the broader lines of Nana's character (a beautiful, and wholly remarkable performance by Anna Karina): the cumulative effect is of a woman who is shown spiritually naked before us.

The motif of the film is stated in the first chapter, in Paul's story of the schoolgirl essay about the hen (*poule*, in French, is also the slang for prostitute): "The hen is an animal which is composed of an outside and an inside. If one takes away the outside, there is the inside . . . and when one takes away the inside, there is the soul." *Vivre sa Vie* sets out systematically to peel layer upon layer from a girl to see what lies beneath. The film opens, therefore, with an examination of the surface. Behind the credits we see Nana's face in close-up, first in left profile, then full-face, and finally in right profile. And when the film begins, the shell is completed with the long scene in which she is viewed from behind. At once, as the first scene proceeds, the impression given of her is contradictory. She is leaving Paul because it suits her; because, as he suggests, she has met someone richer than he who will be able to help her in her career as an actress; but there is also that gesture of tenderness, and her attempt to express some idea about herself which he cannot understand (when he questions her about the other man, she repeats the phrase "What has it got to do with you?" in four different tones, puzzled, and adding, "I wanted to say that with precise meaning . . . and I didn't know the best way to express it . . . or rather I did know, but now, just when I need to know, I don't").

Gradually, as the film progresses, we gather a mass of details, some tiny, some important, sometimes contradictory, (Continued on page 50)

†Difficult to translate without sounding idiotically literary, but roughly: "I think there is great goodness in you."





Charlton Heston in Nicholas Ray's "Fifty-Five Days at Peking", story of the Boxer Rebellion.

## IN THE PICTURE

### The B.F.I. Award

FOR FOUR YEARS NOW, the British Film Institute's annual award, the Sutherland Trophy, has been made on the last night of the London Festival. The winners: Yasujiro Ozu, Satyajit Ray, Michelangelo Antonioni, Ermanno Olmi. But the award, though it may go to a festival film, relates to a whole year of the National Film Theatre's work. It goes to the film which, in the Institute's collective opinion, carries the most exciting possibilities: to "the maker of the most original and imaginative film introduced at the National Film Theatre during the year."

The linking of the award with the Festival presentation has to some extent obscured its real purpose. The London Festival is non-competitive, and the Sutherland Trophy does not go to the best film at the festival, or even to the "best" film shown during the year. How to choose, for 1962, between Buñuel and Lang and Dovzhenko, between Polanski and Patroni Griffi, between the Renoir of *Madame Bovary* and the Renoir of *Caporal Epingle*? The terms of the award imply that the film should have some unmistakable quality of excitement about it, in the context of the year of its presentation.

On this occasion, the Institute's choice (announced for the first time in SIGHT AND SOUND, as it will be in future years) is vigorously controversial. The award has been made to Jacques Rivette, director of *Paris Nous Appartient*, the film which aroused several London critics to a passion of furious incomprehension, which enjoyed an unhappily brief commercial run, and which still seems to us as strange, as spellbinding, as relevant, and as authentic an expression of life in an age of anxiety as it did when we first saw it more than a year ago. (In future, the award will date from January 1st-December

31st; this time, we include the overlap period from the end of the 1961 London Festival to the New Year.) Jacques Rivette, one of the directors from the *Cahiers du Cinéma* team of critics, has made only this one feature film; and that in conditions of considerable financial difficulty. He is just about to start work on his second, *La Religieuse*. *Paris Nous Appartient* is about Paris, and youth, and the indefinable strains and tensions with which we all live. More than that, it sets up the kind of creative tensions which indicate the presence of a very considerable talent.

### Cold Tracks

TOM MILNE writes: Norway boasts one of the world's humbler film industries, with present feature production ranging from 4-8 films annually, generally the lower figure, and mostly of rather doubtful quality. This is partly accounted for by the fact that most of the country's cinemas are municipally owned, so that a hefty share of the profits goes into providing splendid public parks and art galleries, rather than being ploughed back into the industry; but mainly because (vicious circle of the small industry) foreign distribution is difficult. Ironically, one of Norway's best outlets—apart from its free access to the whole Scandinavian market—is Russia. Not, as Norwegians ruefully admit, that the Russians particularly like their films, or even want to pave the way for a political conversion, but the tie-up helps Russia to keep down the number of capitalist Western bloc films in its foreign quota.

Occasionally a Norwegian film will slip into Britain, like Edith Carlmar's *The Wayward Girl*, disguised under the Swedish banner: Swedish girls have that sort of reputation. There was, of course, the famous French-Norwegian co-production *La Bataille de l'Eau Lourde*, while Arne Skouen's *We Die Alone* was received with respectful admiration when it was shown here in 1959. Skouen's latest (eleventh) film, *Kalde Spor* (*Cold Tracks*), was premiered in Oslo last October, on the occasion of the presentation of the *Solvklumpen*, which is, roughly speaking, the Norwegian equivalent of the Academy Award. The première/presentation was rather an endearing affair, vastly different from the pompous circumstance of our own such occasions. The audience, mostly in everyday clothes, liberally supplied with shopping-bags, parcels, newspapers and bits and pieces, wandered cheerfully and noisily in and out, paying remarkably little attention to the ceremony quietly unrolling on the stage, where the pretty girl looked embarrassed at not knowing to whom she was supposed to present her bouquet. *Kalde Spor*, however, was far from a joke.



The story covers more or less familiar ground. Sixteen years after the war, a man returns to the icy mountains where he was guide to a Resistance group of twelve men who were betrayed and froze to death on the mountainside. Now a memorial stone has been placed on the spot where their bodies emerged from the melting snow in the spring. Supposedly the man has come back to confront the betrayer, but in fact he is the culprit, exacting a subtle kind of penance from himself. But as the hero, Oddmund, starts on his lonely climb through the wide, chilling expanse of snow and silence, broken only by a line of tracks and the strangely haunting hiss of skis over the crisp snow, and he suddenly seems to be accompanied by a file of twelve ghostly shadows, it becomes obvious that Skouen is a director of very considerable talent. "Skiers crossing a white mountain plateau, like black dots in a vast expanse: something we have all seen. And if we see a ski track, we can hear the skis. The crunch of boots, complaining in the cold. Wind rising to a gale, driving the snow in clouds. Sounds and images that are our inheritance from childhood on . . . I have wished to build up a film on materials and effects that are ours alone, on solely Norwegian themes," Skouen has written. And this is precisely what he has done.

Sounds, images, glimpsed figures, tracks in the swirling wind and snow—past and present imperceptibly become one on the screen as they have become inextricably mingled in Oddmund's mind. It is the discretion of Skouen's use of the ghostly figures (rarely seen, but whose presence, and the sound of their skis, haunts the film), and the free flow from flashback to the present, that make this film a remarkable study in obsessive guilt. The scene where Oddmund digs deep below the surface in a snowdrift to uncover the memorial stone, while above the camera surveys the bleak, empty plateau, and only his voice is heard painfully spelling out the names of the twelve men, has a compelling, obsessive quality which stands comparison with similar scenes in Kuleshov's *Expiation* or Sjöström's *The Wind*.

The last scene, too, when Oddmund is called out on to the mountain by his ghosts to lead them to safety, has a hallucinating quality rare in the cinema. Exhausted, he draws a revolver to defend himself and his ghosts against pursuit, and it is with a sudden chill that one understands that he will not move again, frozen to death as he kneels to take better aim. And the gesture of the girl who finds him, taking the revolver from his hand and slowly pouring snow over the clenched fist to conceal what it held from the posse of searchers just appearing on the skyline (are there *twelve* figures?) has a strangely moving beauty. *Kalde Spor* is a film which deserves to be seen.

As a footnote: to make the film, Skouen took his actors and crew up into the Jotunheimen, skiing up the mountain to the locations, and with the whole unit taking their part in pulling the equipment on sledges. After the last scene had finally been shot satisfactorily, in sufficiently wintry conditions, there was a sudden panic fear that Toralf Maurstad (playing Oddmund) had been severely frostbitten while kneeling patiently in the snow and wind. He wasn't. But there is surely a moral there for some actors?

## Prelude to a Palace

ALBERT JOHNSON writes: There is a Persian fable which tells of a wizard's palace where dreams were given reality. After granting the wishes of all his courtiers and wives, the wizard was left by himself and died of loneliness. Almost overnight, his palace vanished, and in its place the wizard's devotees, ashamed of their negligence, erected a temple of precious stones. They did not realise that this had been the wizard's own dream. One is reminded of this after having mourned the dismantling of the old Garden of Allah hotel on Sunset Boulevard, that crumbling showcase of a vanished Hollywood dream. When the Lytton Savings and Loan Association put up a building on the site, one's chief impression was of its sprawling modernity, its architectural self-assurance. Although it boasts a fountain and some forbidding city trees, one passed it with a certain awe, imagining certainly that money could be taken into such a bank, but scarcely surmising that anything could be withdrawn from it.

Now, however, the lower floor of the bank has become the home of the Lytton Center of the Visual Arts, with a theatre and exhibition halls devoted to the history of the motion picture. The Center is in many respects a prelude to the Hollywood Museum, and will serve as an adjunct to its activities. The nucleus of the exhibition is a formidable and fascinating collection of artefacts and pre-Edison

machines built up by the Danish film producer Mogens Skot-Hansen. This collection has now been purchased by Bart Lytton, the bank's president, and will be on permanent display in the Hollywood Museum, when that is completed in about 1964. Mr. Lytton, a former screenwriter, has, with the assistance of his exhibition director, the documentary film-maker and writer Herbert Kline, made the Center a first step towards Hollywood's rediscovery of the cinema's past, a contribution to the industry's belated recognition of its obligations to the education of its public.

Apart from the exhibition of machines such as Kircher's Magic Lantern, the Praxinoscope, Zoetrope and Lefèvre's delicate hand-painted slides, the Center features a 75-foot photo-mural designed by the photographer Eliot Elisofon. A collection of retrospective stills from screen classics, chosen by Arthur Knight and arranged in a mosaic design, this structure is a symbolic indication of the enthusiasm behind the Center's scholarly intentions. The theatre, perhaps the most comfortable motion picture house in America, seats about 200, with orange, yellow, red, purple and green colours alternating in the seat fabrics, reminding one of a collaboration between Matisse and Le Corbusier. Programmes during the first months of its operation have ranged from *Greed* to *Boccaccio '70*. There is also here a display devoted to SIGHT AND SOUND's "Top Ten" survey conducted last year, supplemented by letters and film selections from Hollywood directors. And this affords an interesting commentary on the absolute inability of critics and film-makers to agree on very much, it seems, except the splendour of Welles' *Citizen Kane*.

The indefatigable Herbert Kline and his artist wife Josine Ianco, the Center's curator, have other projects under way, including film showings and exhibitions on the Civil War and a tribute to the musical. Standing in the foyer, watching a giant "Spatial Kaleidoscope", designed by Roger Darricarrère, making its abstract, mysterious light patterns and shadows, one wonders what the ghosts of the Garden of Allah would make of their palace.

## In Production

JACK CLAYTON: *The Pumpkin Eater*, from the current best-seller by Penelope Mortimer. For Romulus.

BRYAN FORBES: *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*, a psychological thriller starring Richard Attenborough. For Beaver, Forbes' and Attenborough's own company, releasing through Rank.

SIDNEY FURIE: *After The Boys*, *The Leather Boys*, a story of a motor cycle gang with Rita Tushingham, Dudley Sutton and Colin Campbell. Garrick, for British Lion release.

KAREL REISZ: *Ned Kelly*, with Albert Finney as the legendary bushranger. Australian locations; script by David Storey, of *This Sporting Life*. For Columbia.

ROBERT WISE: *The Haunting*, adaptation of a characteristically equivocal ghost story by Shirley Jackson, with Claire Bloom, Julie Harris and Richard Johnson. For M-G-M.



Joan Crawford and Bette Davis as the two warring Hollywood sisters in Robert Aldrich's "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?"



# SURVIVOR



Sir Michael Balcon on the set of "The Scapegoat".

by Penelope Houston

"YOU ARE TALKING TO A professional survivor," says Sir Michael Balcon, reminding one that his life-span roughly coincides with that of the cinema industry, while his involvement with British production has been close and constant for just over forty years. Mention the sale of Ealing Studios (in 1956) to BBC Television, and he reminds you that he'd already been through it with another studio, Shepherds Bush. Mention the Common Market and co-production in general, and Sir Michael—who doesn't envisage a Common Market cinema as Dino De Laurentiis sees it, at least in the foreseeable future, and has never dabbled in co-production—recalls the unhappy Anglo-German film axis of the Twenties. As chairman of Bryanston, the consortium of independent producers, he takes a major hand in current production investment; he has become known as one of the spokesmen for Pay TV; and he is just completing a new picture, *Sammy Going South*, which brings Alexander Mackendrick back as a director after a five year break.

At a time when the British cinema is bestirring itself to find new directors, as it has not done in years, what does Sir Michael think about its present situation and prospects? Is he, I asked, more or less confident and optimistic now than he was ten years ago, in the heyday of Ealing? "Reasonably confident . . . but as optimistic as I was ten years ago? No. No, I couldn't say that." Like many of us, he regrets the British cinema's extreme dependence on novels and plays for its sustenance. Is it, one asks, that producers simply won't take risks on material of anything less than best-seller status? Sir Michael sees it partly as a more subtle kind of insurance: the director who has begun his career with a commercial smash, he says, is bound to want to repeat his achievement on those terms. Consciously or unconsciously, he'll try to protect himself; and here lies the straight road to the best-seller.

More generally, he finds British film-makers ready to accept adaptations because they haven't intense convictions of their own about what they want to film. "You feel that the French directors would put up with a lot, would starve if necessary,

just to make the film they want to make. This certainly isn't true of British film-makers." With the mounting enthusiasm for the cinema in this country, the raising of the level of critical debate, why isn't there this kind of creative drive? Sir Michael has no clearer answer to give than the rest of us. He merely notes its absence, and assures us that his own organisation, and others along with it, is genuinely on the look-out for this sort of talent if only it would present itself.

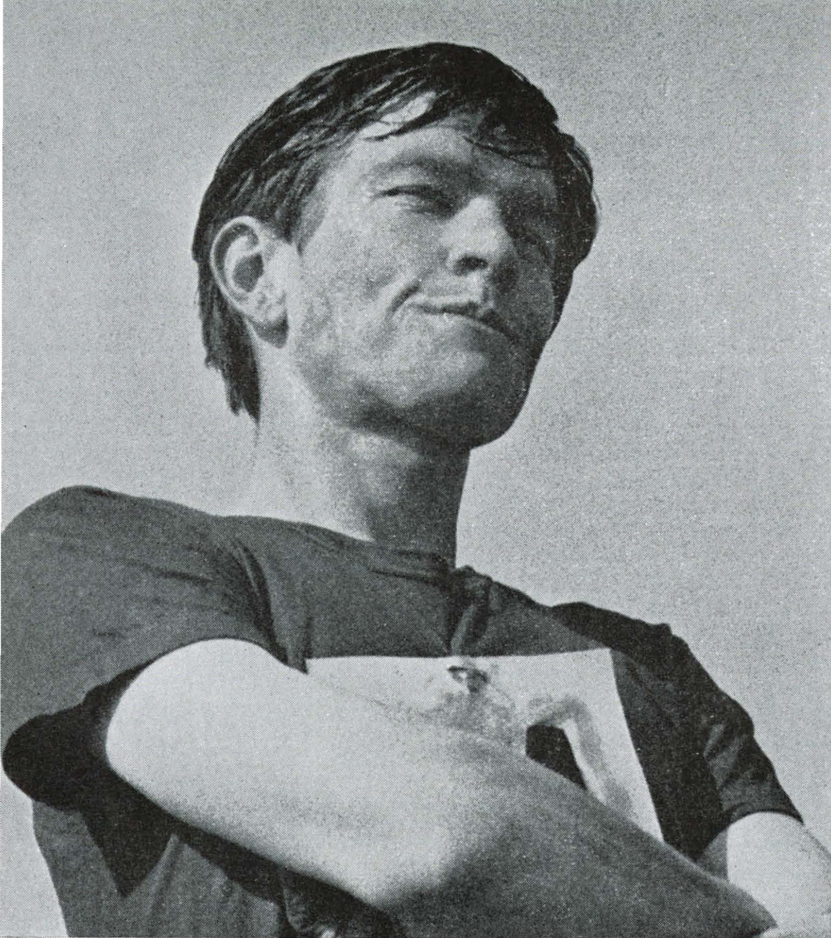
Bryanston itself links a number of independent producers, who may work entirely through its organisation or may (as Woodfall have done in the case of *Tom Jones*) choose to take a production elsewhere. Its purpose is to provide production finance, and to do so at producer level, through a board who are themselves active film-makers. It works through a system of revolving bank credits, guaranteed by solid assets: the credit, in other words, will go on revolving provided that there isn't too much discrepancy between what comes in and what goes out. In financial terms, Sir Michael expresses himself as "satisfied with my stewardship"; in creative terms, in spite of the Woodfall films and some enterprising second features, the satisfaction is slightly more tempered.

One comes back, as so often in the British cinema, to the working conditions of production and exhibition. Ealing essentially functioned as a team, and Sir Michael sees the breaking-up of the team as a reason for the near-eclipse of so many of the one-time Ealing talents. No one, anywhere, could now reconstruct an Ealing operation: independent production, one picture at a time, has become his own method. But the producer, though independent, is not necessarily free. Sir Michael and his long-time associate Hal Mason, producer on *Sammy Going South*, are in no sense anti-union men. They pride themselves that Ealing never knew a strike. But, all the same, they tell one that at the end of a big picture nowadays "you heave a sigh of relief that you've got through it safely, without labour problems." And, with each production costing a little more than the last, they quote some of the more daunting figures. Airline costs, for instance, for getting the *Sammy Going South* unit of fifty to Africa, added a clear £20,000 to the budget. On African locations, salaries and wages were approximately two-and-a-half times the U.K. rate.

But costs and labour difficulties are not the only hazards. "You are bound," Sir Michael says, "to think in terms of the existing distribution system, you have become geared to it." He mentions a project put up to Bryanston which couldn't be taken up, whatever kind of film it might have made, because it would only have been feasible in British terms as a second feature, though it might have made an art house film elsewhere. Aren't we, I ask, running head on into a problem? If the world trend is towards big budget commercial pictures, which Britain has never been good at except in *Guns of Navarone* conditions of Anglo-American partnership, or the art house movie, which we don't make either, aren't we likely to be left out in the cold? Sir Michael is more hopeful about the future of British middle-budget picture-making, and certainly he has the current box-office figures to point to. All the same, he agrees completely with John Houseman (see the last *SIGHT AND SOUND*) that the audience has become the unknown quantity. You can, he says, still predict a blazing commercial success (a *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*) at rough cut stage; but that's about all.

So we come to Pay Television, seeking out the audience at home, though here again he sounds a hesitant note about the immediate future. As everyone seems to agree, a limited Pay TV test would prove nothing in particular, while a really effective test would involve so much capital expenditure that Pay TV would by then have become an established fact. Supposing we had a working system of Pay TV operating at this moment, what films would he be making for it? But Sir Michael refuses to be drawn: he sees Pay TV not as the way towards a particular kind of film, but essentially as a new market outlet, a part of the strategy of survival.





***I'd***  


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***rather***  


---

***be like***  


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***I am***

*some comments  
on *The loneliness  
of the long  
distance runner**

BY PETER HARCOURT

ALAN SILLITOE HAS BEEN praised for his fine writing; yet it is the implications of his fine writing that have been so little understood. His work has more often been talked about in terms of its social significance, and he has been linked with a number of young authors who display a certain robustness in their writing and who have also been concerned with predominantly working-class life. In fact, along with John Osborne and possibly Arnold Wesker, Alan Sillitoe has come to be thought of as one of the literary leaders of a new voice of protest in Britain, for he too has been prominent in anti-nuclear demonstrations and has explicitly voiced his discontent both on television and in the press. Certainly the protest is there in his writing; but this way of thinking about his work has tended to minimise his actual achievement as a writer and has failed to do justice to the frequent subtleties of his art. Yet it is his achievement as an artist—his ability not only to describe but to re-create the feeling of experience in words—which makes his best writing so admirable, and enables us to respond to it no matter what we might think of his anarchistic view of life or of the anti-social values he seems to endorse.

Within the limits that it sets itself, the story of *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* has at times the ambiguity of great art. By the words and images that both spring from and create the mind of the boy, as by the attitudes and emotions that give them depth and meaning, we are pulled in different ways. For the story is not only about a boy at odds with his society, but about a state of mind as well. And this state of mind, while very much that of Colin Smith, the boy, in the way that it is presented, often has a reference beyond the story itself, a reference not just to the material conditions of life today in Britain but to a way of feeling which really seems a part of the spirit of our times.

Whether consciously or not, Sillitoe presents us with a state of mind which is more than merely that of the self-appointed outlaw, as he describes a loneliness which goes beyond the physical isolation of Colin's early morning runs. In fact, the very absence in the story of any social density or of the felt reality of any other people contributes to this effect; so that Colin Smith's loneliness often feels like the loneliness of someone who is unsure of his relationship to virtually all his fellow-men. It becomes the loneliness of someone who, in his imagined isolation, at times feels "like the only man on earth"; as it is the loneliness of someone who inhabits a world which he finds both foreign and frightening. In short, at certain focal points in the course of the story, the loneliness of Colin Smith appears to be that of the psychological cripple. And it is part of the artistic subtlety of even so slight a story that at times, by implication, it seems like the loneliness of us all.

\* \* \*

*It was hard to understand, and all I knew was that you had to run, run, run, without knowing why you were running, but on you went through fields you didn't understand and into woods that made you afraid, over hills without knowing you'd been up and down, and shooting across streams that would have cut the heart out of you had you fallen into them. And the winning post was no end to it, even though crowds might be cheering you in, because on you had to go before you got your breath back, and the only time you stopped really was when you tripped over a tree trunk and broke your neck and fell into a disused well and stayed dead in the darkness forever.*

With this passage, an example of Sillitoe at his best, we can return to the notion of fine writing. Yet it is not simply the adroitness of prose rhythm and freshness of language that gives the passage its strength: if in the breathless sweep of the long sentences there is an enactment of the breathlessness of



the runner himself, there is also in the imagery a certain ambiguity, a quality simultaneously of beauty and of threat which gives the passage (and so the story) a wider range of reference than just to life today in Britain. Although Colin Smith is simply musing as he runs, as (by convention) is a habit with the boy, at this particular moment, through the actual words and images that Sillitoe puts into his mouth, the language takes on the force of a poetic evocation, a poetry not just of beauty in the language that has been chosen, but of universality in the things being said. In this and similar passages, Colin seems more than the somewhat waggish outlaw and becomes the philosophic spokesman for a feeling in us all.

Such a passage, then, if responded to fully, has arguably more in common with the writings of Kafka than with any naturalistic novel of social discontent. It not only embodies Colin's feelings on what he realises will be his last open run, but it also suggests the fantasies of someone who is lost in the world and scared by it. The woods he feels are frightening and the fields he cannot understand; and most subtle and suggestive is the constant sense of menace, the hostility of the tree trunk or of the disused well where one will stay "dead in the darkness forever"—a more powerful image, I feel, of a fortuitous disaster than the occasional references Sillitoe makes to the actual yet inconceivable bomb. In fact, it is this sense of imminent disaster which runs through the story, the recurring recognition that "a big boot is always likely to smash any nice picnic" we might ever manage to make for ourselves, that helps to give the story its universal applicability, as it gives young Colin Smith his peculiar honesty and strength. Yet the frightening pathos of the story (as perhaps now of modern life) is that his kind of integrity, his refusal to have any contact with what he regards as the world of "them", can only in the end be mutually destructive, since Colin lives proudly in a constant state of war.

Colin Smith not only believes in the necessity of cunning but in the validity of spite. Even if it means depriving himself of the greatest freedom he has ever known—the freedom of being alone on his early morning runs, the approaching loss of which brings tears to his eyes—he will, out of spite, work against his Governor; as he admires the spiteful policeman who, to remind her of the trial, got his mother out of bed at four o'clock in the morning.

*It was the finest bit of spite I'd ever heard of, but I would call it honest, the same as my mam's words were honest when she really told that copper what she thought of him and called him all the dirty names she'd ever heard of, which took her half an hour and woke the terrace up.*

Although the characteristic exaggeration prevents us from taking such a passage too seriously, it is somewhat to my amazement that, in admiring the story, so many people have found Colin's attitudes wholly admirable as well.

For, with the help of Robert Lindner and his *Rebel Without a Cause*, it could be possible to understand these attitudes as those of the psychopath, an increasingly urban phenomenon of the man who must rebel against the ethics of the society he feels only as a threat. In fact, in all of Colin's thinking there are these psychopathic tendencies: this sense of threat and constant persecution, the self-contradictions about the world he despises, plus the exaggerated value placed on cunning and deceit and the pride he takes in his ability to lie. Even more striking and central to the story are the references to his father and to the loneliness of his death. Remembrances of his father and his own "outlaw" death impinge on Colin's mind throughout his final run; as though it is for his father's sake, through fidelity to his memory and to the loneliness of his death, that he must not win the race, or gain approval

and respect. And of course, still like the psychopath, he must explain his self-destructive attitudes in terms of self-ennoblement and assertions of self-respect.

*I suppose you'll laugh at this, me saying the governor's a stupid bastard when I hardly know how to write and he can read and write and add up like a professor. But what I say is true right enough. He's stupid and I'm not, because I can see further into the likes of him than he can see into the likes of me . . . I don't care what anybody says, but that's the truth and can't be denied. I know when he talks to me and I look into his army mug that I'm alive and he's dead. He's as dead as a doornail . . . At the moment it's dead blokes like him as have the whip-hand over blokes like me, and I'm almost dead sure it'll always be like that, but even so, by Christ, I'd rather be like I am . . .*

Of course, in such a psychoanalytic response to the story, its more intimate characteristics would tend to get lost. Yet it is part of the strength of this particular story that it can nevertheless lend itself to such an analysis and allow itself to be approached from such a diagnostic point of view. Also, of course, it is these psychopathic elements that make it such an expression of the spirit of our time. If, on the surface, it is just a story of a boy who is in declared rebellion against the society in which he lives, it is also a most sensitive example of the restlessness and psychic discontent which, as Dr. Lindner insists, is increasingly a menace in our times. In his open rebellion, in his very spite and deceitfulness, Colin Smith speaks up for an element of mistrust, discontent and alienation which, it seems to me, is increasingly a feeling in us all. It is, almost paradoxically, through the delicacy of the art, through the suggestiveness of the language and the spirited humour of the boy, that (however much we may regret it and wish it were not so) we can respond to Colin Smith as a new kind of hero.

\* \* \*

At the sound of the lonely "trot-trot-slap" of Colin's thudding feet which opens the Woodfall film, we feel for a moment that we are about to take part in a unique and distinctive experience in the cinema. Yet, once past the credit



*"The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner":  
Colin Smith hands the race to his opponent.*



titles, it is the sad and central failing of Tony Richardson's film that none of the suggestiveness of the original story has been allowed to survive. In the process of adaptation, the best elements in the original, elements that are inseparable from Alan Sillitoe's words, indeed the living breath of the story itself—all this has been lost; while the element of spite, just a part of the story, seems to be the basic impulse from which the film has been conceived. In the story, the world Colin inhabits never fully appears. Especially in the Borstal sections, apart from a few snatches of reported speech from the Governor, Colin is—appropriately—very much alone. Indeed, the fact that the society he inhabits is never clearly visualised increases our sense of the boy's isolation. In Tony Richardson's film, however, we are forced to see it all. And from the early image of the Borstal/prison tower to the final frozen shot of the hands of the inmates dismantling old gas-masks, what we see is constantly a series of distortions. Everything in the film has been planned to reinforce Colin's sense of the unbridgeable gap between "them" and "us". Instead of subtly evoking a minutely personal yet symptomatic state of mind, the film's vision has been narrowed to an examination of a social situation, and to the offering of an analysis which rings disquietingly false.

With the exception of Michael Redgrave's performance as the Governor (into which he manages to instil a degree of sympathy), all the Borstal officials are either brutes or clots. Most annoying because most needless is the handling of the analyst, gratuitously ridiculed both when with the Governor and with the boy, and presented in terms which I find offensively naïve. Is this all that can be said about more sympathetic attempts to deal with the problems of juvenile rebellion than those represented by the well-meaning, but imaginatively most limited, person of the Governor? But the film doesn't even seriously pose this question, since it is too busy having fun with a preconceived point of view. In fact, all the incidents the film has added to the story serve only to reduce it, to emphasise class hatred and the element of spite. The greasy, bickering fancy-man; the burning of the money; the wan, pathetic ugliness of the trip to Skegness; the beating-up of Stacey; and the introduction of the public school (though, surprisingly, the public school boys are quite generously

handled): all these additions serve to limit the original and to confine the film in the mud of class resentment.

But it is the gratuitous ridiculing of so many of the characters, the hateful presentation of all chance encounters, that serves to reinforce this sense of spitefulness. Everywhere there is anger, sullenness and discontent: with the railway official, with the boarding-house landlady and, by implication, with the bartender in the pub. Yet what are we supposed to feel about these people? And what in fact do the film-makers feel? In the film there is a *confusion* rather than an *ambiguity* of feeling, a confusion which finds its reflection in the style itself.

For instance, during the incredible Borstal concert, after the self-righteous, forgiving introduction by the Governor in a hall drearily lit by one single light, there is a confusion of emotion hard to understand. At one moment the boys are hooting at the bird-imitations; and then at the next, enthusiastically, even angelically, singing their full-throated hymn. How do we feel about the boys in this sequence? How in fact do Richardson and Alan Sillitoe feel? And what is supposed to be our response to the inter-cutting of shots of the capture and bringing in of Stacey? Heavily ironic, that we can tell. But where is the irony pointing? What is being got at? What is the point this sequence is trying to make? As with the panic-tracking of the camera during the refectory rebellion, the film-makers themselves scarcely seem to know.

The film is in fact a series of clichés, depending for a response on the conditioned reflexes which we can be expected to bring to a set of recognisable types and incidents. There is here no fresh observation of English society, nor any sense of an individual artistic response. We are simply escorted along the now well-known routes: we are asked to disapprove of all authority and of television, and glumly to respond to the dreariness of slum living, the noisy comfort of a pub, and the wet emptiness of English beaches. Even in Tom Courtenay's dexterous performance (a performance which *Time* found "prolier-than-thou"), we feel that he has been exploited for the potential ugliness of his face. There is an externality about the film's whole conception, so that, unlike the story, it has neither a style nor a pulse of its own.

Indeed, this externality could be further demonstrated by referring in more detail to the film's technique. John Coleman has pointed out the many "borrowings" from Truffaut (*The New Statesman*, October 28th, 1962), "borrowings" the more distressing because they never seem to work. One of the most poignant moments in *Les Quatre Cents Coups* is Jean-Pierre Léaud's encounter with the analyst, while the corresponding scene in *Loneliness* is unpleasantly naïve. Where Truffaut is moved by a feeling for the boy, and the whole film is so handled that we sympathise as well, the feeling in *Loneliness* is more *against* all such intrusions, a generalised negative attitude of rejection and of hate. Similarly, the final zoom freeze in *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, by referring back to the earlier frozen shots when the boy was in the police-station, not only gives the film a formal element of "rhyme" but suggests the "wanted" posters which will now haunt his life; while the final shot of *Loneliness* springs from nothing within the context of the film, and appears as clumsy as it is derivative.

In the same way, in both John Addison's music and Walter Lassally's camerawork, there seems to be no organic relationship to the feelings of the boy. The irony of *Jerusalem* is too insistently heavy-handed, while the jazz that accompanies the running sequences strikes one as totally wrong. The runs should be free, open, delicate and, if they were to do justice to the story, should convey a mixture of delight and dread. Yet the over-insistent trumpet and tightly-strumming rhythm section suggest a confinement and mechanical response which



Topsy Jane and Tom Courtenay: "the wet emptiness of English beaches . . ."



appears directly opposed to what should be the liberating feeling of these runs. And the picturesque bits of photography (the silhouetted sequence with the setting moon and the rising sun) look like inserted purple passages, for we are never made to feel that they have a meaning in relation to Colin Smith.

Finally, there are the flashbacks and then the stretto of flashbacks, as if, at the end, Colin Smith were still attempting to make up his mind. "Whose side are you on anyway?" the voice of his mate, Mike, returns to his ears. And so, from the conscious memory of things that have recently happened to him (with only the most cursory use made of the emotional shock of his father's isolated death) and not from a deep-seated feeling which is innate within him, for what is largely a superficial kind of spite indulged in to achieve reinstatement in the eyes of his mates—so it is for these reasons, in the film, that he loses the race. The ambiguity of feeling in the original story has here become an ambiguity of decision on the part of the boy himself. Yet who really decided on these crude changes when Sillitoe himself is responsible for the script? Not only has the delicacy of implication contained in the verbal imagery been thrown away, but it seems to me the whole point as well.

\* \* \*

It would be a mean and unprofitable activity so rigorously to find fault with one particular film were it not that its failings seem symptomatic of more widespread attitudes. For one of the great limitations of so many of the new British films can be seen in terms of this externality and uninventiveness of technique. Of course, there are obviously the limiting physical factors of production in this country, the economic pressures which encourage conventionality of technique, as there are the problems inseparable from the process of adaptation which must undoubtedly contribute to this lack of freshness on the screen. But more important than these, I feel, is the sociological bias which seems such a part of so many of these films. No doubt from their origins in the Free Cinema movement, the films have set out to explore the less familiar territories of working-class life; and yet, in doing so, they have succeeded in presenting us less with the unique quality of individual life than with the broad general outlines of sociological types. They have been less concerned with the exploration of the intimacies of day-to-day living than with a pictorial demonstration of what is already known to be there.

In their original form, the great strength of both *Look Back in Anger* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* lies not in either Jimmy Porter's or Arthur Seaton's analysis of society but in the intensity of feeling with which they articulate their discontent. And, of course, this strength of feeling is embodied in the words. In both the film versions, the inward strength of feeling has been sacrificed to an outward presentation of the society in which they live. More important than this is the air of general statement, which in all the film versions of works by Osborne and Sillitoe seems unnecessary and false. Jimmy Porter, Archie Rice, Arthur Seaton and now Colin Smith all make statements about life today in Britain, statements which in the films seem to ask for endorsement. So with the exceptions of *A Taste of Honey*, where the delicacy of Shelagh Delaney's central relationship manages to shine through the encrustations of Richardson's technique, and of *A Kind of Loving*, more modest in its intentions and achieving a greater intimacy of observation, with the familiar Northern settings taking on an almost symbolic force, it is the quality of general statement running through the films that seems symptomatic of the limitations of them all.

This is what life is like in Britain today (most of these films seem to say): look at our Establishment, our fun-fairs, our beaches; look at our Borstals and our ugly city lives. Yet why do we have so little feeling for the characters and so much



*Depression in Skegness.* Tony Richardson and his actors at work on the café sequence, the cheerless end of a holiday.

against all that is ugly and wrong? Why do we never see our cities as René Clément showed us London? And why are the locations all in Nottingham and not in York? How often in these films, with their desire to present life as it really is, do we feel a real sense of compassion on the part of the filmmakers for the characters they have created? How often is there gaiety or any allowance of hope?

In Olmi's *Il Posto*, in all the films of Truffaut and Antonioni, what shines through the frequent horror and emptiness of the situations is the overwhelming sense that these directors *really care*, that they value the people whose lives it has been their privilege to probe and explore. And even when the situations may themselves seem quite hopeless, it is to my mind a manifestation of these directors' own faith in life that the characters nevertheless continue to hope and to be concerned. At the end of *L'Avventura*, on the terrace in the morning, there is Claudia's frail gesture of pity and forgiveness; while even at the end of such a turbulently confused work as *La Dolce Vita*, Fellini cannot help but remind himself and us that somewhere—even though he cannot really grasp or record it—wherever there is youth, there is still the possibility of a more positive kind of life. Amid the cleansing sounds of the wind and the sea, he cannot help but end his film with the image of the little Umbrian angel, a symbol (certainly real, though artistically hardly earned) of fragile innocence and trust. It is the presence of effects such as these, conveying their sense of compassion for the characters that have been created, which makes these films such enriching experiences, and gives us at the end of them—as Fellini himself has said—"the feeling of being set free."



**O**UR correspondents at Cannes, Venice, Berlin and elsewhere have already written about many of the entries in the 1962 festival; other films have been, or will be, reviewed on their London openings. Here Peter John Dyer discusses three films from new directors; and a group of SIGHT AND SOUND writers sum up their impressions of the festival films.

## THE FILMS:

Banditi a Orgosolo (De Seta)  
 Baron Munchausen (Karel Zeman)  
 The Bread of our Early Years (Vesely)  
 Le Caporal Epinglé (Renoir)  
 Un Coeur Gros Comme Ca (Reichenbach)  
 La Commare Secca (Bernardo Bertolucci)  
 Darling (Maunu Kurkvaara)  
 La Dénonciation (Doniol-Valcroze)  
 Devi (Satyajit Ray)  
 Early Autumn (Yasujiro Ozu)  
 Electra (Ted Zarpas)  
 The Exterminating Angel (Buñuel)  
 Football (Drew/Leacock)  
 Homage at Siesta Time (Torre Nilsson)  
 Knife in the Water (Roman Polanski)  
 Il Mare (Giuseppe Patroni Griffi)  
 I Nuovi Angeli (Ugo Gregoretti)  
 The Olive Trees of Justice (James Blue)  
 Placido (Luis Berlanga)  
 Poem of the Sea (Dovzhenko/Solntseva)  
 The Sad Young Men (Rodolfo Kuhn)  
 Sanjuro (Akira Kurosawa)  
 The Siberian Lady Macbeth (Wajda)  
 Sun and Shadow (Ranghel Vulchanov)  
 Susan Starr (Drew/Leacock)  
 The Trial of Joan of Arc (Bresson)  
 Vivre sa Vie (Jean-Luc Godard)  
 War Hunt (Denis Sanders)

## THE CRITICS:

BRENDA DAVIES  
 PETER JOHN DYER  
 JOHN GILLETT  
 PENELOPE HOUSTON  
 TOM MILNE  
 GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH  
 DAVID ROBINSON  
 JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

★★★★

DAVIES:	Caporal Epinglé, Early Autumn, Exterminating Angel, Knife in the Water
DYER:	Devi, Exterminating Angel, Il Mare, Vivre sa Vie
GILLETT:	Early Autumn, Exterminating Angel, Knife in the Water, Sanjuro
HOUSTON:	Caporal Epinglé, Early Autumn, Exterminating Angel, Knife in the Water
MILNE:	Caporal Epinglé, Devi, Early Autumn, Exterminating Angel, Vivre sa Vie
N-SMITH:	Caporal Epinglé, Exterminating Angel
ROBINSON:	Caporal Epinglé, Exterminating Angel, Knife in the Water, Il Mare
TAYLOR:	Caporal Epinglé, Early Autumn, Exterminating Angel, Trial of Joan of Arc

★★★

DAVIES:	Electra, Il Mare, Olive Trees of Justice, Sanjuro
DYER:	Early Autumn, Knife in the Water, Sanjuro, Siberian Lady Macbeth
GILLETT:	Baron Munchausen, Caporal Epinglé, Devi, Football, Il Mare, Trial of Joan of Arc
HOUSTON:	Devi, Electra, Il Mare, Sanjuro, Vivre sa Vie
MILNE:	Knife in the Water, Il Mare, Sanjuro, Siberian Lady Macbeth
N-SMITH:	Early Autumn, Knife in the Water, Il Mare, Vivre sa Vie
ROBINSON:	Devi, Football, Vivre sa Vie
TAYLOR:	Devi, Il Mare, Poem of the Sea, Siberian Lady Macbeth, Vivre sa Vie

★★

DAVIES:	Devi
DYER:	Commare Secca, Nuovi Angeli, Sad Young Men
GILLETT:	Un Coeur Gros, Commare Secca, La Dénonciation, Electra, Nuovi Angeli, Olive Trees of Justice, Placido, Poem of the Sea, Sad Young Men, Siberian Lady Macbeth, Sun and Shadow, War Hunt
HOUSTON:	Commare Secca, Trial of Joan of Arc
MILNE:	Un Coeur Gros, Commare Secca, Electra, Football, Olive Trees of Justice, Trial of Joan of Arc, War Hunt
N-SMITH:	Commare Secca, Sanjuro, Siberian Lady Macbeth
ROBINSON:	Un Coeur Gros, Nuovi Angeli, Placido, Poem of the Sea, Sad Young Men, Sanjuro, Trial of Joan of Arc
TAYLOR:	Baron Munchausen, Sanjuro, War Hunt

★

DAVIES:	Darling, Football, Siberian Lady Macbeth, Susan Starr
DYER:	Darling, La Dénonciation, Homage at Siesta Time, Placido
GILLETT:	Bread of our Early Years, Darling, Susan Starr, Vivre sa Vie
HOUSTON:	Banditi, Darling
MILNE:	Bread of our Early Years, Darling, Nuovi Angeli, Placido, Sad Young Men
N-SMITH:	Nuovi Angeli, Placido, Trial of Joan of Arc
ROBINSON:	Banditi, Darling, La Dénonciation, Homage at Siesta Time, Susan Starr
TAYLOR:	Homage at Siesta Time

★★★★ TO ★ INDICATE CRITICS' RATINGS

● EXPRESSES ANTIPATHY



# LONDON FESTIVAL

## Life's a pain, anyway

**PETER JOHN DYER**

THE MOST STRIKING THING about three of the many first films screened during the 1962 London Festival is the way in which plot and characterisation are contingent solely upon fundamental, evidently unresolvable states of mind—boredom, inadequacy, guilt, rage. Equally striking is their stylistic assurance. When I add that they invoke ambiguity, seafront inertia, a strictly limited number of locations and actors and a vague air of unreality bordering on the metaphysical, then the enormous nature of the risks being taken becomes clear. Not everyone can be an Antonioni. Perhaps no one, and I address myself particularly to Argentina's Rodolfo Kuhn, should try.

Not that I don't sympathise with Kuhn and his generically titled *The Sad Young Men*, even if I cannot admire them to the extent I admire Patroni Griffi's *Il Mare* and Polanski's *Knife in the Water*. His story of three young men from Buenos Aires and the girls that take unlooked-for advantage of them in Mar del Plata is the most plainly intent on condemning a highly contemporary kind of moral passivity and mechanical sensuality. The girls are extremely well characterised and played, Kuhn wittily flays the banality of a living earned in TV commercials; indeed the whole film is directed most effectively against the notorious commercial tradition in South America of ornate and highflown variations on *Madonna of the Seven Moons*.

Unfortunately, in identifying himself so closely with Antonioni, Kuhn has tended to replace one kind of pretentiousness by another. There are other models able to describe incapacity more directly than Antonioni, others less likely to prove inimitable. No one can seize quite as he does upon the exact moments when truth breaks through the barriers of accepted pretence so as to be seen in its most forceful light. Such moments, after all, come from the certainty of a man who has explored the depths of his own experience and surfaced confident in his possession of the heart of the matter. In Kuhn's case it isn't simply that he lacks the years to define the essence of his own and his characters' sadness. What makes his film so affected is the devices he summons up to hide this lack—the sort of sexual symbolism (dripping taps, a clockwork walking teddy bear which runs down at the moment of consummation) that ought to have gone out with Gréville's *Remous*; and some risible attitudinising against



Françoise Prévost in "*Il Mare*".

steering-wheels and seascapes in the last reels. There remain considerable technical resource and a sympathetic way with actors; anyone who can reproduce the externals of Antonioni as faithfully as Kuhn is by no means lacking in talent.

2

Giuseppe Patroni Griffi's *Il Mare* has also, misleadingly I think, been termed Antonioniesque. In fact it was the most quirkily individual first film in the Festival, the most moving (which makes a change), the most pictorial in its evocation of a state of mind.

It describes the incapacity of a young actor (nicely underplayed by Umberto Orsini) in wintertime Capri to gauge and satisfy the emotional needs that give the two people he accidentally meets in this desolate place their reasons for being there: reasons which, if not conventional or straightforward, could at least be made clear to him if he took the trouble to listen and understand. One is a handsome young runaway (Dino Mele), possibly virginal, very probably homo-





"Il Mare": Umberto Orsini and Dino Mele.

sexual, muffled romantically against the cold as he roams the narrow twisting alleys swigging John Haig from the bottle. The other is an attractive woman tormented by memories enshrined in the valuable house she plans, as a gesture of self-violence, to part with to a philistine lover. Just as the boy senses a latent homosexuality in the actor, so the woman discovers after an unsatisfactory, artificially passionate night with him the same undefined failings she has found in some other man from her past. By ignoring the nature of the distress signals sent out by these two people, the actor finds himself more alone than ever, his incapacity—we have already found him to be irritable, obtuse and selfishly cruel—now loaded with a depressingly intangible sense of guilt.

Though Giovanni Fusco's exotic, throbbing score might lead you to believe so, *Il Mare* is not a romantically pessimistic exercise like *Une si Jolie Petite Plage*. It has something of the surface, but none of the inner rage against a dead world of the emotions, of Antonioni. Patroni Griffi's style, his consciousness, can best be described as one of exuberant fatalism owing something to Sartre and something to the Cocteau of *L'Eternel Retour*. This fatalism is explicit in the story, implicit in the way it extends to the hypnotic visual imagery, starting with the screen-filling T-rails on board the ship, their focal point anticipating that of the actor's egocentric attitude to the three-cornered relationship he becomes involved in; then progressing through similarly geometric patterns (diagonal movements, the listless posing of characters in the corners of the screen or taxis or rock-ledges) towards an abstract omnipresence symbolised by the sea, rocks, rain, faces reflected endlessly in folding mirrors.

The mirage-like futility of the characters' belief that they can banish loneliness by means of each other is heightened by, among other things, startling optical illusions involving long-range reverse-shots. The boy and then the woman are introduced in a way that conveys thrillingly and poetically all the unexpectedness and adventure of a real-life pick-up in some strange deserted place. The arched, labyrinthine streets; the actor's rush towards the newcomer to find he has mistaken

her for the woman whose arrival he's been impatiently awaiting; the velleity of his attraction towards the boy on the rock, expressed in a forward camera-track followed by a bland retreat—all these things are electrically charged.

Although the actor is the one character with Antonioni connotations, his sexual need for the woman, bereft as it is of any vibration of the spirit, is represented by a highly original device. It is equated, in two economical visual strokes, with the most habit-forming thing imaginable—a cigarette: once when the cigarette is held in foreground close-up, shifting to reveal the woman standing in long-shot in a corner; again when it is thrown away, changed by a cut in mid-air into a discarded shirt. And the absurdity of extravagant sexual exertion as a substitute for love has rarely been summed up with such annihilating force as in the shot of the actor's bare legs as he stumbles towards the bathroom under the cold gaze of the woman who has spent the rest of the night in a chair.

The boy, an aggressive, intricate adolescent who might have come right out of Gide's *Les Faux Monnayeurs*, provides the film's sensation of walking a tightrope over unknown gulfs. His duologues with the actor are shot exactly like a love scene, and the sequence of their night out together is masterly in its sustained tension. The whisky bottle gradually becomes an embodiment of menacing, surrogate desire, a desire doomed to be unfulfilled and suddenly exploding into rage when the boy thrusts eau-de-cologne down the actor's throat and dumps him unconscious in a bathful of water.

If the film's fatalism takes its impetus from such involuntary gestures, gratuitous and at once compulsive, the exuberance I mentioned earlier is to be found in the wry comedy as well as the tragedy-queen trappings of the woman. Equally gratuitously, equally compulsively, she is meant to be none other than Garbo; or at least an amalgam of the on- and off-screen Garbo. The clues are everywhere, from the obvious (she actually ends one scene by declaring she wants to be alone) to pastiche remarks like "Why haven't the Swedes invented a mobile chair?" and, after searching self-criticism of her face in a mirror: "Tonight I did the best I could." A running exit



becomes an imitation of Garbo's splay-footed gait; shots of her in a boat or the ship or fondling the things in her room are given the full Mamoulian-*Queen Christina* treatment. Her humour is as Scandinavian as her décor. With the boy as her accomplice strumming threateningly on a guitar, she slowly advances on a terrified little old man, her right eye sinisterly closed, her spatulate fingers outstretched to mime the cutting of his throat. Later, taking languid aim with two fingers, she "shoots" the boy as he stands at the far end of an empty swimming-pool.

It says much for Patroni Griffi's control, and for Françoise Prévost's spiritually detached performance, that this *hommage à Garbo* actually strengthens the film's mood. There is an oddly muted ferocity, a kind of silent reproach, in the scenes between the woman and the actor, with their intimations of moneyed leisure, words bare and empty as spacious rooms, the complete isolation of someone walled up by memories and expensive, *recherché* possessions. It is from this woman's surely rather hideous villa that hopelessness beacons forth over the island and the surrounding sea, reminding one of that celebrated remark, following a prolonged, uncomfortable silence, which Garbo once made to the young and inexperienced Laurence Olivier: "Life's a pain anyway."

### 3

*Knife in the Water*, the first feature of Roman Polanski, co-director of *Two Men and a Wardrobe*, suggests along subterranean lines characteristic of the young Poles that life isn't so much a pain as pain. The weapons, guarded as a button on a foil, are glances, words (very few and always exactly chosen), sado-masochistic symbols like a belt, a knife, a woman's shoe. Beneath the film's sardonically funny surface lurk much the same states of mind as in the other two films: incapacity, guilt, rage, humiliation. The language is again that of personal as well as sexual annihilation. In a silence that jabs so much it almost eviscerates, a middle-aged man and his wife take their customary early morning weekend car ride to the yacht in which they try to compensate for a boring urban existence. He is bad-tempered and aggressive; she registers patient indifference behind a notably impatient-looking pair of batwing glasses. Sharing their yacht on this, as it turns out, crucial weekend is the fair-haired and blue-jeaned student, defiantly hip and independent, that the husband almost runs down in the road. The boy isn't much interested in boats. The husband insists he join them, partly out of that nagging, traditionally Polish sense of honour, partly to bolster up his own ego by scoring off the boy in front of the woman.

Not that this film is altogether about the sex war. Its theme is the sterility that hides behind meaningless bourgeois poses, the way in which they can block the spontaneous intimacy of a human relationship like marriage and infect, by extension, the whole of modern life. The husband would never admit to himself that he asked the boy to join them rather than spend another weekend alone with his disquietingly impassive wife. The wife, for her part, is too conditioned by orthodox morality to make any immediate or compromising sexual overture to the boy. And when the husband tries to show up the boy through his expert knowledge and the paraphernalia with which he surrounds himself, the wife remains neutral—even when the boy burns himself holding a casserole which the husband has complained is too hot to grasp.

The tension springs from this battle of wills, with the older man perpetually goading and the younger answering him back in his own coin, namely honour. Stonily courageous, stripping to the waist in a casually provocative display of animal magnetism, toying with that highly Freudian knife which the husband secretly covets, the boy drives the other to a neurotic pitch of self-assertion which is deflated only when

the former is knocked overboard. Frozen but all the time blissfully aware that he is in sight of revenge, the boy feigns death, returning in the husband's absence to accept the wife's favours before disappearing, honour satisfied, out of their lives.

Even the final sexual encounter, which could so easily have been a cliché, carries an enigmatic charge. Both soaked to the skin, the boy suddenly looks like a girl, the wife like a boy. For an hour and a half we have watched three people behave as elliptically yet naturally as people do in real life, learning no more and no less than we would had we actually been there with them. Situations arise only to sheer off at a tangent in a way that is wholly lifelike, never conventionally dramatic. Only the camera emphasises those things—the boy's physique, for instance—which the characters themselves pointedly ignore or, at best, merely accept with a shrug. Polanski is a holy terror of intelligent restraint—detached, ironic, playful as a cat with a mouse, encompassing with ease his alternations of the deathly serious and the dead-pan comic. The final image, with the man and the woman (batwing glasses now speaking volumes) sitting in the car at the crossroads, achieves the kind of immobile chill which it usually needs a Bergman or an Antonioni to convey.

There is, in fact, an almost frosty absence of comment and compassion in Polanski that could prove less a signature than a limitation in the future. His visual language is grey, fluid and imaginative; his characters rivetingly modern and yet typical enough to be individuals speaking for a certain country and set of traditions. Perhaps, if the theme were less strictly one of emotional sterility, if the characters' hearts had been more on view and their entrails less (there's something narrowly intestinal about competitive bravery and the tit-for-tat brand of comedy that goes with it) I wouldn't be faulting this film on grounds of lack of common humanity. *Il Mare* has a readiness to admit emotional contact, if only in the character of the boy, which I find ultimately missing in Polanski. In its place there is the vaguest hint of a compensatory sado-masochistic bent, confirmed, perhaps, by that rather repellent little short of Polanski's also shown during the Festival—*Le Gros et le Maigre*. Still, one used to aim the same sort of criticism at Bergman around the time of *Sawdust and Tinsel*, and then had to eat one's words when *Wild Strawberries* came along. And I'm as cautious of blaming Polanski for being pre-occupied with the Polish code of honour as I am of finding only diabolism in Bergman—or for that matter inversion in *Il Mare*.



"Knife in the Water".



# MARKER VARDA RESNAIS

CLASSIFICATION IS A KIND OF ANALOGY: it proves nothing and is only valuable if it tells us more about what is being classified. Ever since the new wave broke upon the world, critics have tried to divide the flood of new young film-makers into smaller and more meaningful groups. The *Cahiers du Cinéma* team would seem to constitute one group. Another is made up of Agnès Varda, Chris Marker and Alain Resnais. Agnès Varda's *oeuvre* is still relatively unknown in this country; Chris Marker's is almost totally so. One hopes that the forthcoming season of their works at the National Film Theatre will help to make them better known and will also demonstrate that they all have something more in common than, as Agnès Varda declared in a recent interview, their love of cats. This article is, in effect, an examination of that "something more." A few facts, first.

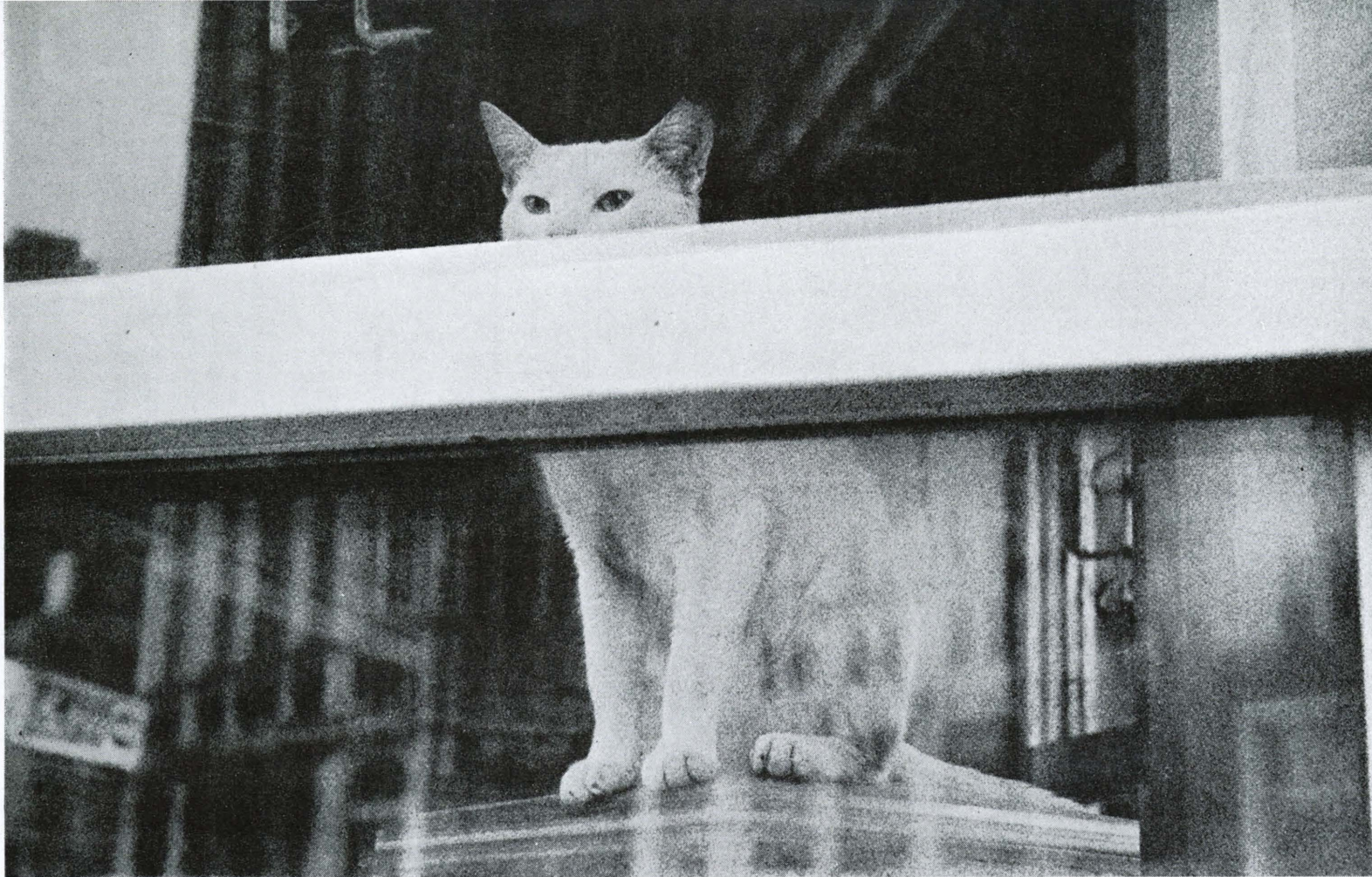
The average age of Marker, Resnais and Varda is about 37. They were all born and brought up outside of Paris—Resnais

RICHARD ROUD

## THE LEFT BANK







in Brittany, Varda in Sète, near Montpellier, Marker, God-knows-where. They all live in Paris on the left bank of the Seine—Montparnasse, Alésia, Val de Grâce. With one or two exceptions their films are all set outside of Paris. They all began to make films long before the new wave explosion of 1958: Marker in 1953, Varda in 1954, Resnais in 1948. All have made documentaries—and Marker has made *only* documentaries. These, then, are some of the facts. What conclusions can be drawn from them?

The Left Bank, as the saying goes, is not so much an area as a state of mind. It implies a high degree of involvement in literature and the plastic arts. It implies a fondness for a kind of bohemian life, and an impatience with the conformity of the Right Bank. A centre of the avant-garde and a cosmopolitan refuge since the turn of the century, it has also traditionally been frequented by the politically left. The Dôme was not only a rendezvous for Picasso, Joyce and Hemingway; Trotsky and Lenin were also habitués.

This political, artistic and social climate is what presumably attracted all three artists to this neighbourhood; it is also reflected in their work. In a recent interview, Roger Leenhardt characterises the *Cahiers* faction as people who discovered Shakespeare through Orson Welles. This may be an exaggeration, but there is no mistaking the wider cultural background and broader artistic interests of the Left Bank group. One has only to compare the writers Resnais has chosen as his collaborators (Robbe-Grillet, Duras, Cayrol) with the favourites of

some of the *Cahiers* group (Roger Vailland, Françoise Sagan, and worse). Then, too, the fact that the Left Bank group have come to the cinema steeped in the tradition of the avant-garde and the literary and artistic preoccupations of recent years, has given them a greater interest in the problems of form. The Godard-Truffaut group, on the other hand, have grown up with the cinema. They feel that its essence is in its very rawness, its direct communication of experience—like Hitchcock, like Hawks. Whether this split is due to the difference in ages, whether the Godard-Truffaut group (who are also, let us remember, hostile to Antonioni) is more “cinematic” or more “modern”, is not for us to say. But the fact remains that there is a basic difference in conception; a difference that has often been covered up by the log-rolling so characteristic of the “young French cinema.”

Perhaps because of their age-group, Marker, Varda and Resnais also seem to have inherited the legacy of the Thirties:

LEFT: The “Cléo” unit: Agnès Varda in front of camera next to Corinne Marchand. Lighting cameraman Rabier on the extreme right.

ABOVE: Portrait of the director as a young cat. Marker replies to all requests for photographs of himself by sending pictures of cats; this one was taken by Resnais.

RIGHT: “Cuba Si!” “. . . Here the tobacco kings and sugar-cane emperors came to relax”—pre-Castro Cuba.







a passionate concern about political and social problems and a conviction that these problems have their place in the realm of art. They are, it seems to me, all humanists, although they might very well quarrel with the term.

In an open letter to Armand Gatti (director of *L'Enclos*) printed at the end of his book *Coréennes*, Marker excuses himself for not having treated in the book the Great Problems. There are enough people doing that already, he tells Gatti: just refer to your daily newspaper. It is not my job, he continues, to distribute praise and blame, nor to give lessons. There are plenty of people to do that, too. Marker (and Resnais, and Varda) do not believe that the aim of art is to teach lessons, nor necessarily to draw conclusions. But unlike Truffaut, I would say, and Godard, they do feel that personal problems and emotions should be seen in a social context. Resnais' earlier documentaries (*Guernica*, *Nuit et Brouillard* and *Les Statues Meurent Aussi*, which was co-directed by Marker) all deal more or less directly, if in a highly personal manner, with political and social issues. So, indeed, do all of Marker's films to date. As his work has never been seen in London (with the exception of *Description of a Struggle*), and because he is perhaps the collective conscience, the common denominator of the Left Bank group, it might be well to pause for a moment to describe the completely original and highly significant genre he has created.

*Sunday in Peking*, *Letter from Siberia*, *Cuba Si*. "I write to you from a far-off country," begins the letter from Siberia, and each of Marker's films is a letter, an essay, a declaration. More than any other director, Marker seems to have fulfilled Astruc's famous prophecy of the *caméra-stylo*, writing films as one writes a book. The most remarkable thing about Marker's

Above: Varda photographed by Resnais.  
Left: Resnais photographed by Varda.



film-essays is that their fascinating, maddening, highly literary commentaries (Malraux plus Giraudoux divided by x) seem neither to have preceded the shooting of the films nor to have followed it. Image, text and idea seem miraculously to have been created simultaneously. Although the commentaries have been published, they only take on real meaning when one has seen the films. The great episodes—like the parade in *Cuba Si* which transforms itself into a jubilant conga-line, or the parodies of communist-capitalist propaganda in *Letter from Siberia*—scarcely come over on the printed page. And yet Marker has been accused of being precious, literary and over-ingenious. But what hasn't he been accused of! *Cuba Si* is banned in France and in Germany; *Les Statues Meurent Aussi* is only authorised in a truncated version. His next film *Le Joli Mai* will certainly be forbidden by the censor, dealing as it does with the less agreeable aspects of life under the 5th Republic. But one feels that Marker has made his films not so much as propaganda, not so much to convince others, but because he has felt the need to express what he personally thinks about China, Russia, Israel and Cuba. Marker is fairly unorthodox in his political sentiments. "We will go to the moon. Either from Siberia, or from New Mexico—it doesn't matter much. There is only man." And if Marker had ever made his *L'Amérique Rêve*, we would have seen realised his fascination for America, for its pop art, its comic strips—a fascination that he shares with Resnais, a fascination for the image, in whatever form it appears—Mandrake the Magician or Miro. "Images, portents, signs." But Marker's calligraphy is also made up of music, animation, poetry, colour: every technique, every effect is conjugated and the result is a kind of one-man total cinema, a twentieth-century, a 1 to 1.33 Montaigne.

But Resnais, we know, was aiming at opera, not essay. What he sought for a long time was a form which would be able to express both social problems and emotional ones. Something between documentaries such as *Guernica* and his early 16 mm. efforts like *Ouvert Pour Cause d'Inventaire*, which treats the problems of fear and desire, of a man and a woman who try vainly to come together. The solution to his problem was found by Agnès Varda; and, typically enough, she found her example in literature. Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* is a book made up of two short stories. One, "The Old Man", is the story of a convict who sacrificed everything to escape from freedom and love; the other, "The Wild Palms", is the story of a man who sacrificed everything for freedom and love and who lost both. The stories are each split into five parts, and printed in alternate chapters.

The effect Faulkner obviously aimed at was a kind of contrast or counterpoint; but it was the success of this form that gave Agnès Varda the hope that she might accomplish something along similar lines. In her first feature, *La Pointe Courte*, independently produced in 1954, she filmed the struggle of a small fishing village in the South of France against the economic domination of the big combines, side by side with the story of a young man from the village who has come home with his Parisian wife in a last attempt to sort out the failure of their marriage. The two stories are told side by side, but the two themes are never intermingled. It was up to the spectator to make the connections between these themes—to compare them, to contrast them. In spite of the brilliance of its conception and its astonishing visual beauty, *La Pointe Courte* is not entirely successful if only because of the pretentious performance of its leading lady. Silvia Montfort was neither an Emmanuelle Riva nor a Delphine Seyrig, and actresses of their stature are necessary for this kind of potentially irritating role. But the idea worked—so well that when Agnès Varda asked Resnais to help her edit the film he was very reluctant to do so, precisely because she had succeeded in doing something he had been aiming at for a long

Varda's "O Saisons, O Châteaux": fashion models on parade at Chambord, or ladies of the court of François Premier awaiting the return from the hunt?



A scene from "Muriel", the film which Resnais has been shooting during the last few months at Boulogne.

time. He eventually gave in, and it is no exaggeration to see in *La Pointe Courte* the not very distant ancestor of *Hiroshima, mon Amour*. *Hiroshima* is more successful, I think, not only because of its greater technical skill (*La Pointe Courte* was Varda's very first attempt at film-making) but also because Resnais succeeded completely in fusing not only past and present but also the girl's personal conflict with the larger problems of war and peace. *Cléo de 5 à 7* also reflects the binary structure of *La Pointe Courte*, at once both objective and subjective—Cléo's odyssey from the Rue de Rivoli to the Salpêtrière Hospital and her spiritual odyssey from ignorance to understanding.

*Cléo*, however, is further from *Marienbad* than *Hiroshima* was from *La Pointe Courte*. No doubt *Muriel*, the film on which Resnais is now working, and *La Mélangite*, Agnès Varda's next film, will be even farther apart. Marker, as we have seen, has created his own "thing", as Henry James would have said. But as the new geometry has taught us that parallel lines do sometimes meet, perhaps it would admit that they can also start from a single point—and that point would be somewhere between the Dôme and the Rue Mouffetard, between the Sorbonne and the Rue Jacob, on the left bank of the Seine.





# GIULIO CESARE CASTELLO

## CINEMA

## ITALIANO 1962



THE SIGNIFICANCE, SCOPE and limitations of the so-called renaissance in the national cinema since 1959 have been hotly debated in Italy for some time now; with doubts increasingly expressed, especially by the more Marxist critics, about this "miracle" (to use an expression of the "economic miracle" kind) or "new way" (to use a publicity slogan put out by Titanus, the largest production company). At the end of 1961 the Socialist Party's newspaper *Avanti!* started a discussion with an article by Mario Gallo and Lino Micciché which accused the Italian cinema of being "neo-capitalist". According to these two critics, the neo-capitalist position in the cinema is one "in which producers, far from producing a cinema which goes against current ideas . . . support, if they do not actually promote, one which broadly—or at least apparently—accepts the present scheme of things, tries to play down the thorniest problems, or offers solutions 'within the framework of the system'."

Critical attitudes of this kind, though there is a pinch of truth implied in them, are based on a functional view of art which makes them tendentious and impossible to accept. Critics such as these want a cinema that will break with the past, socially and politically; while other, younger critics want an experimental cinema, full of excitement, and accuse official criticism of being indifferent to the new directions taken in film-making. Both, in short, regret that talent, both old and new, is swallowed up by the industry, with a consequent limitation on its margin of creative freedom.

Argument along these lines would take us too far from the subject. All that needs to be said is that the real risk in this present boom period of Italian cinema lies in the fact that the industry insists on controlling not simply quality (in cases where this applies), but quantity as well. This means that ours is an overgrown cinema, with large areas of it botched and tasteless, and a mistake in production policy may some day come back and hit us, as it has done

"The Eclipse": Alain Delon and Monica Vitti.





Marcello Mastroianni in Germi's Sicilian comedy "Divorzio all'Italiana".

in the past. All the more so since production costs have risen alarmingly, for a whole series of reasons ranging from American productions in Italy to the shortage of qualified actors, with exorbitant rates consequently demanded by the few who are at the top.

A case such as that of Vittorio De Seta, who in 1961 made his *Banditi a Orgosolo* in complete and austere independence, is not so much rare as unique. One hopes, of course, that others may do the same sort of thing; but quite obviously, even in cases where a man is wholly disinterested financially and has a sense of vocation, this can only happen in special circumstances. The material pressures of the industry are inescapable. On the other hand, we are seeing more of the young, open-minded independent producers, such as Alfredo Bini (producer of Pasolini's films, etc.) or 22nd October, the group in Milan to which Ermanno Olmi belongs. Apart from everything else, the growth of film-making in Milan is a healthy step towards the decentralisation of production.

The increase in quality production, though, is not entirely the work of the independent producers, many of whom in any case have their associations with the big companies. To a great extent the major companies are also responsible, especially the few who have made "quality" their effective slogan. The producers, of course, are just doing their job as businessmen. If they have decided to go in for quality it is because they sense a shift in public taste. This is the key to the whole business, and the critics are to a considerable extent responsible for it. This gradual evolution of public taste is being followed with the utmost care and concern, since if its progress were to stop—or worse still, to slide back—producers would not hesitate a moment before throwing overboard their present policy of making quality films. However, and for the moment, producers exist who will give their directors full freedom of expression: film-makers such as Visconti, Fellini, Antonioni, Pasolini,

Rosi and so on have worked along their own lines of inspiration; and it is hard to think of a country where backers could easily be found to finance a film like Petri's *I Giorni Contati*, ninety minutes contemplation of death by a man of fifty.

However that may be, the producer, large or small, must reckon with the man who pays him; and this is why the public mood has a determining effect. In the final analysis, it is the public which decides, even if audiences can to some extent be conditioned, negatively and (although this is more difficult) positively. All this is quite self-evident, perhaps, but it needs restating at a time when people's attitudes are both aggressive and abstract.

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What counts, for the present at least, is that audiences seem more and more willing to accept films which may be disconcerting or in some way difficult. There is still a long way to go. Some films which demand an intelligent response from the public do very well, others along the same lines fail lamentably: an *Eclipse* succeeds (partly, no doubt, on the snob value of Antonioni's name) while a *Giorni Contati*, in spite of its quality and its festival awards, has a dismal record at the box-office. Undoubtedly a good many of the people who saw *The Eclipse* were left puzzled or dissatisfied, as happened with *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*. But the fact remains that they felt it was something not to be ignored, whatever their reasons may have been.

*The Eclipse* is one of the films which have dominated the Italian scene, during a year in which Visconti and Fellini appeared only on the level of the *divertissement*, with their respective episodes in *Boccaccio '70*. (Their new and highly important films are nearly completed and will clearly occupy a central position in the Italian cinema of 1963: Visconti's *The Leopard* and Fellini's *Otto e Mezzo*. Quite apart from their artistic potential, both ought to be



works thoroughly characteristic of their directors in terms of temperament.)

The eclipse which gives Antonioni's film its title is in a general sense the eclipse of feeling in our time and in our world—and even more so, Antonioni has said, in a future time and world, at least so far as we can foresee it. The girl in the film has something pitiless and revealing to say about this: "You don't need to know each other, to love. And maybe you don't need to love." Maybe. In the world of Antonioni's characters there is nothing certain except uncertainty, loneliness, and the stubborn, hopeless effort to communicate with others. But out of this vain endeavour—because this is what our instinct prompts—comes another effort: as happens, in fact, in *The Eclipse*, the story of a girl, Vittoria, who after leaving the lover she had thought of marrying finds herself in the condition characteristic of anyone who has just emerged from a serious love affair, which has as it were emptied her inside out—available, and yet diffident. Antonioni has called this phase the *intervallo sentimentale*; and it is a kind of eclipse within the general eclipse of feeling.

I think there is no point in stressing here the coherence and consistency of Antonioni's themes, right through from *Cronaca di un Amore* to *The Eclipse*. This last film of his, however, more specifically completes a triptych with *L'Avventura* and *La Notte*, which are linked to it not only by their themes but by their structural boldness and by the developing subtlety of their language.

*The Eclipse* starts, then, with a break in a love affair, brought about by the girl's decision. But Antonioni, as usual, deliberately ignores what came before: he is not interested in telling the audience the whys and wherefores, and perhaps doesn't know them himself. Freed, then, from a bond which had come

to weigh on her, Vittoria "lets herself live", gives herself to whatever turns up to fill her own emptiness, her own availability. All this sometimes rather too obviously displays Antonioni's literary-looking efforts to point a contrast, and sometimes is full of suggestiveness and invention. While she is trying to get back into the flow of life, Vittoria goes to the stock exchange to join her mother, who plays the market feverishly though with limited resources. And there—in that snake-pit of single-minded endeavour, which Antonioni observes with a cold, detached and insistent emphasis—she meets Piero, a young man on the stock exchange who is accustomed to considering all human values in their surface terms of profit and loss.

The contrasts in *The Eclipse* are crude and, taken along with some of the devices Antonioni uses, give the impression of a film "arranged" in a strictly geometrical pattern; a feeling heightened by the faultlessly sculptural sense with which his characters are portrayed, and by an occasional hint of aesthetic smugness (as in the scene of the break between the lovers, in which Monica Vitti is invariably "posed"). But the devices he uses to show people's surroundings are poetically exact: the noisy inferno of the stock exchange; the old-fashioned and shut-in atmosphere of the home of Piero's parents, contrasted in various ways with the "rationality" of the district where Vittoria and her ex-lover live. A new relationship is born between Vittoria and Piero, in the course of which the girl learns, through being present at a stock exchange disaster, that the world of money is no less insecure than the world of sentiment and lacks, besides, what Sappho called the bitter-sweetness of love. All this (and more) is not said explicitly in the film, but is left to the audience's intuition through the method of objective, indirect narrative which

A scene from Francesco Rosi's "*Salvatore Giuliano*".





makes *The Eclipse* (like *La Notte* before it) something of an essay in behaviour. In this latest film of Antonioni's admirable trilogy even the dialogue has grown more subtle (which is just as well, considering the rather dubious quality of the dialogue in his films), while more space and weight have been given to silences, noises, the language of things, objects, nature.

Vittoria and Piero's is a seesaw relationship and by its nature, through force of circumstances and of character, an ambiguous one. Perhaps even Piero can feel love; perhaps even Vittoria is tempted to face up to a demanding experience. But both are trapped by the obstructions in their own natures. Thus in the "open" ending the sense of ambiguity deepens, as with the similarly "open" last sequences of *L'Avventura* and *La Notte*. Here Antonioni turns to things rather than people, to a diffuse symphony of images which has led people to talk of abstraction and of formless art. (*The Eclipse* has also yielded comparisons with the anti-novel and atonal music.) The film's persuasive power derives in part from this ambiguity—which is not mystifying, certainly, but within limits allows the audience a freedom of interpretation.

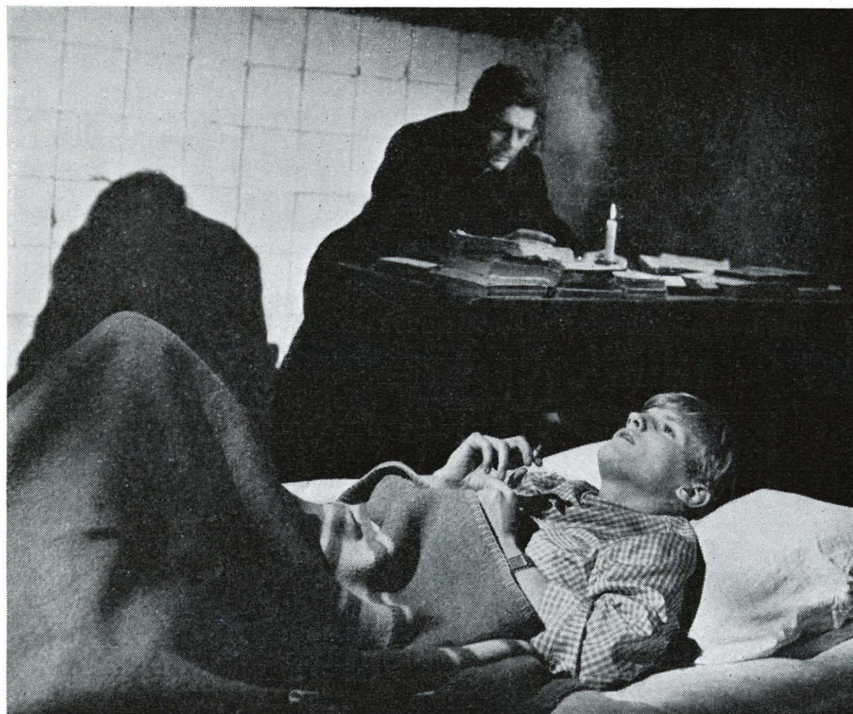
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Antonioni has said that his film is not a story about people, but the story of a feeling. Or a non-feeling. Valerio Zurlini's *Cronaca Familiare* is, on the other hand, very definitely the story of a feeling, as a traditionalist would understand it. For this reason some people have found the film old-fashioned, though unjustly so. Admittedly Zurlini is not aspiring to create new forms, or seeking to revolutionise the language of the film; and he is by nature especially receptive to shades of feeling, to express which he often deploys a tenderness and kindness, and at the same time a degree of truth, rather rare in the cinema. The first part of Zurlini's *La Ragazza con la Valigia*, a story about adolescent love, is an example of this. But *Cronaca Familiare*, the story of a difficult love between brothers and of other family affections, has a more consistent narrative, which is not I think greatly spoilt by rather too much insistence on pathos at the end. Nor is the film handicapped by its emphasis on colour and form, with echoes of Ottone Rosai's Florence, and something of Vermeer's poetic realism, and fleeting hints of Morandi. I have rather more reservations about Goffredo Petrassi's music (with classical quotations): his work, though distinguished in its own right, seems juxtaposed to the visual narrative rather than fused with it.

In *Cronaca Familiare* Zurlini has satisfied an ambition which has been with him since the outset of his career: to film a book he found particularly congenial because of its very fidelity to traditional sentiment. The author is Vasco Pratolini (writer of *Cronache di Poveri Amanti*) and the book was written in 1945, after the death of a younger brother from whom Pratolini had early been separated by the circumstances of their lives. *Cronaca Familiare*, then, is literary in its origins; but because it also comes so close to the director's own interests it would be a mistake to consider it as no more than an illustration of a novel.

Elio Petri's *I Giorni Contati* is another film about estrangement; but it calls to mind Kurosawa's *Ikiru*, or even *Umberto D.* or *Wild Strawberries*, rather than anything of Antonioni's. The main character is a metal worker a few years past fifty who, after seeing an unknown man of about his own age die suddenly on a tram, becomes obsessed by his own approaching death. So he abruptly decides to give up his job, to abandon himself haphazardly to whatever comes along, to rediscover that sense and taste of life which he feels he has not yet savoured. The theme is fine and authentic, and confirms that sense of moral disquiet so eloquently present in the director's first film, *L'Assassino*.

Although *L'Assassino* was planned in an extremely fluent, modern way, from the narrative point of view *I Giorni Contati* is even bolder, since it dispenses with plot and says what it has



Mastroianni, at present Italy's busiest actor, in "*Cronaca Familiare*".

to say in an unordered, disintegrated way—that is, entirely freely. But freedom is not always the same thing as necessity; by which I mean that not all the episodes chosen are strictly essential, that some might equally well be replaced by others. They do, however, express the hero's longing to break through the circle of loneliness, and his repeated and unsuccessful attempts to do so: neither his friends, nor the woman who once loved him, nor his son, nor the landlady and her adolescent daughter, nor the people in his home town, can give him the understanding which would help him to break free. Lack of communication, estrangement, are not a prerogative of the middle classes, Petri seems to be saying, in giving his melancholy protagonist a manual job.

The trouble, when the narrative has no connecting links in it, is how to find a conclusion, an end to the parabola, even if the ending is not to be a "closed" one. Petri has used a rather far-fetched device, especially jarring in the context of a film as opposed to narrative as this one: a fake accident planned for the insurance payment, which the hero at first accedes to because he is penniless, and then backs out of because of his invincible instinct for self-preservation. He has only just taken up his old job, and with it, in spite of everything, accepted life again, when he lays his head back against the seat of the tram, like the man who died at the outset of the film. Is he dead, or just asleep? The film leaves us to suppose the former, but again avoids the explicit statement. These two scenes in the tram, which open and close the film, are among the most interesting in an unusual and disquieting work. You might say that Cesare's last ride on the tram, during which he gazes with renewed, almost astonished curiosity and serenity out at the kaleidoscope of lights, figures and objects, is an equivalent to the final abstract sequence of *The Eclipse*. Here, however, the phenomena of life, as he sees them go by, are contemplated subjectively. Life is there, and remains there, clear and at the same time incomprehensible; and facing these things is the man himself, even if, without being aware of it, he is also facing death. Man and death: that is the film's essential theme.

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The most mature film the Italian cinema has produced in 1962, and also I would say the most important, is Francesco



Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano*, in which the neo-realist heritage still powerfully survives. In approaching the figure of Giuliano (or, rather, the banditry which flourished with such bloodshed in northern Sicily during the first years after the war), Rosi has borne in mind the lessons to be learnt from Rossellini's "epic-reportage" and from Zavattini on "the spirit of enquiry". To some extent, too, he has been influenced by Visconti, with whom he has worked (consider the violence and anger of his realism) and by some American journalistic films of action and protest. These last two influences effectively balance each other.

Rosi, who comes from Naples, is cinematically speaking a Southerner, who seeks out above all a sense of the abnormalities which undermine society and occasionally explode into sudden, violent crises. From Neapolitan subjects he turned to Sicily, from the *camorra* (the Neapolitan secret society) to the Mafia and its underground connections with police and banditry. What is most striking about *Salvatore Giuliano*, apart from its achievement in purely expressive terms, is its profoundly civilised character. Undoubtedly this is one of the most courageous things the Italian cinema has ever attempted, and a valuable contribution to our knowledge both of Italy and of certain key questions: the problem of separatism, a movement which caught on in the poorest areas of Sicily at the end of the war, thriving on hostility towards the united state of Italy, which had solved none of the island's problems; a fellow feeling for the brigand, considered as the hand of justice; the problem of the state's inability to enforce respect for the law and its recourse to unorthodox methods and shady alliances; the problem of rivalry between the various forces representing the state itself; the problem of the Mafia's underground power and its ramifications into politics; and so on.

Bringing order out of something as intricate and as full of loose ends as the story of Giuliano, with its apparent contradictions, its obscurity, its still unsolved mysteries, was a really appalling job. Rosi managed it by applying a fundamental idea coherently throughout the film, and thus giving it a particular flavour: the idea being that he was not to superimpose himself in the smallest degree on the actual reality. If there were dark corners in this reality, then they must remain dark in the film; but the arrangement of the narrative, the

way the facts are marshalled out of so many to make up the extremely complex whole, allows the audience to discern as much truth in the shadowy parts as Rosi himself could see. For *Salvatore Giuliano* manages to be at once a polemical, committed work and one of the most objective—if not the most objective—of all the films that have sprung from our national life. This means that the film is something of a choric work, with the figure of Giuliano, a pawn in a big game, pushed into the background: when he appears—alive—he is always shown foreshortened. Around him, the narrative develops as a mosaic. And although the aggressive freedom of the narrative links, the connecting passages from one sequence to the next, from one point of time or one character to another, may throw the audience out a little, anyone watching carefully (especially at a second viewing) will discern the balance of light and shade. This elaborate narrative structure is not something imposed on the film, but is integral to the director's view of his immensely complicated subject.

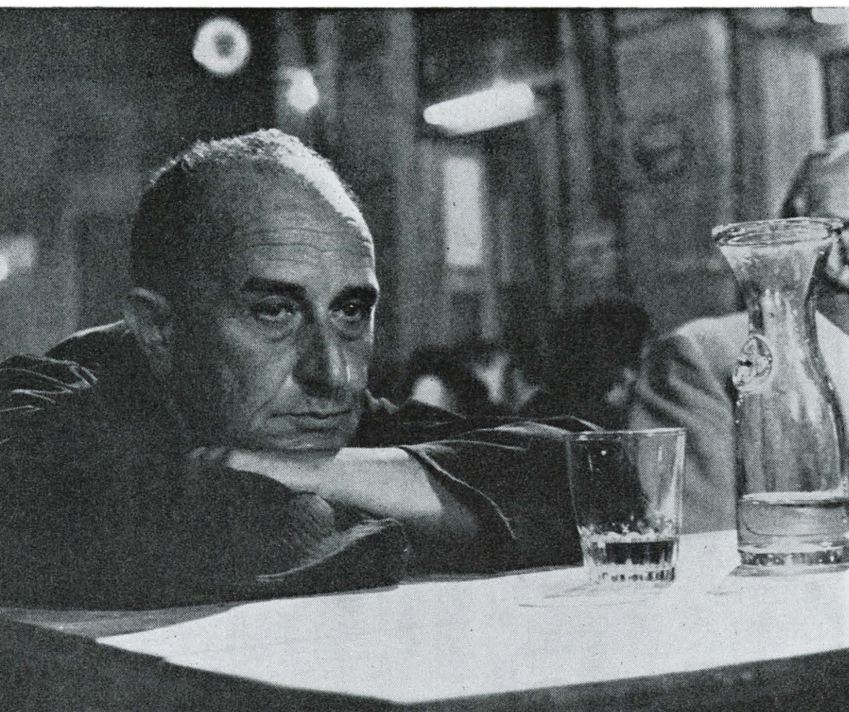
Consider, for instance, the documentary coldness of the opening sequence, which shows the legal formalities with regard to the corpse of Giuliano, whom the police pretend to have killed, whereas in fact they have had him assassinated by his lieutenant; the prolonged excitement of the search through the village for the men; the chilling way the mortuary is depicted, and the mother's intensely human and spontaneously theatrical cry over the bandit's body; the tumultuous reconstruction of the trial at Viterbo, where the survivors of the gang are condemned for a massacre committed during a peaceful gathering of peasants. Everything here, from the most intense moments to those which appear most documentary and impersonal, is governed by the same spirit—one that seeks to state the facts, to respect the moral weight of the evidence.

Rosi has said that he tried to give his film the substance of history and the form of good journalism. If, on the one hand, the style goes rather beyond the virtues of expert reporting, on the other the perspective in which we see present-day Sicily is not yet, perhaps, the definitive one of history. The fascination of the film lies partly in the fact that the spectator feels he is uncovering truths which belong to history, while simultaneously he is caught up in something as fiercely topical as a newspaper story. And the story itself has been stripped of many of those veils of legend and deception which previously masked its truth.

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Sicily continues to provide stimulating material for the Italian cinema, as *Un Uomo da Bruciare* has also shown. The film has three directors, Paolo and Vittorio Tavarni and Valentino Orsini, and along with Bernardo Bertolucci's *La Commare Secca* ranks as the most interesting first work of the year. Vaguely inspired by the case of Salvatore Carnevale, a trade unionist who was assassinated years ago, *Un Uomo da Bruciare* makes a valid contribution to the number of films which have studied the social problems of Sicily in general and the Mafia in particular. It, too, is to some extent a panoramic work, but its main aspiration is towards the individual portrait: a character study, original in itself and originally drawn, of a young agitator whose nature is so complex and contradictory that it shades off into ambiguity—a man sincerely animated by the revolutionary spirit and yet at the same time ambitious, greedy for personal prestige, and so much of a mythomaniac that he feels in himself a vocation for martyrdom.

Another intelligent film, and one unusual in the Italian cinema because of its consciously grotesque character, is inspired by a Sicilian theme: Pietro Germi's *Divorzio all'Italiana*, which has managed to hold its own commercially



Elio Petri's "I Giorni Contati": "... ninety minutes contemplation of death by a man of fifty."



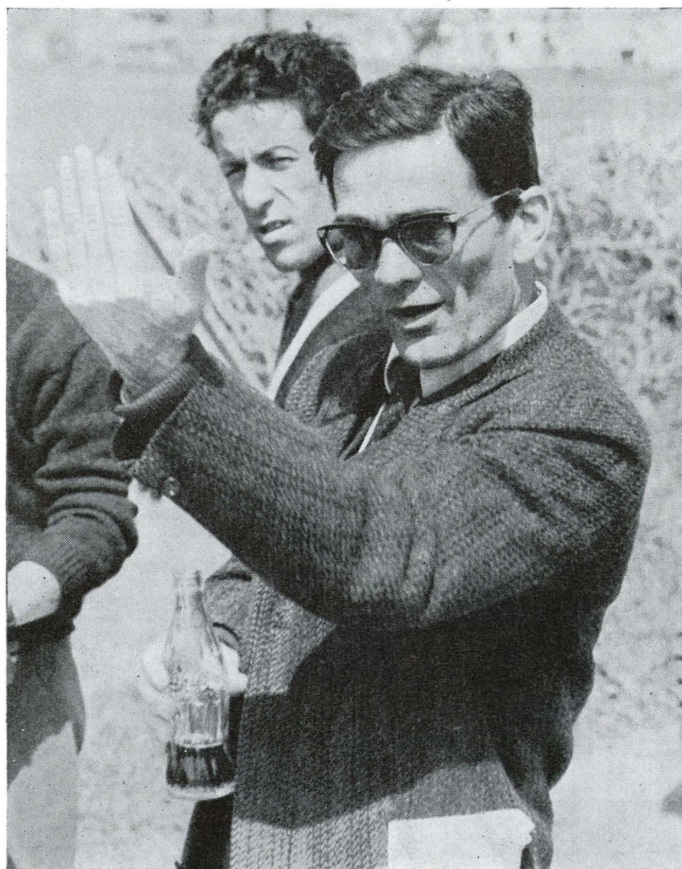
even in competition with the superspectacles. In a country (Italy) where divorce does not exist and annulments are generally difficult and expensive to come by, in a region (Sicily) where customs concerning the relations between the sexes are still extremely and rigidly old-fashioned and people infinitely touchy about the whole business, the so-called crime of honour is taken pretty lightly and subject to only the mildest of legal punishments. Germi's grotesque tale is constructed on these two factors—the impossibility of divorce and the easy acceptance of the crime of honour—and while masquerading as entertainment of a rather harsh type it discloses, in fact, an unprejudiced attitude which in the present state of Italy is not without its courage.

The story is slight: a Sicilian baron, getting on for forty, disliking his clinging and unattractive wife and being in love with a hot little adolescent cousin, thinks up an ingenious plan to throw his wife into the arms of a one-time swain of hers. He will expose himself to ridicule in order to have the right to kill her and, after a bare three years in gaol, get the girl he loves. The film is often amusing, but never without a bitter, sardonic note which is most effective when the treatment is at its driest. *Divorzio all'Italiana* is not an unimportant work, but it would have been more persuasive if it had held to a more disciplined style, without nudging us quite so hard, without the constant over-emphasis which only ends by inducing a sense of the monotonous and the mechanical. In particular, the style tends to blur the distinction between reality and the hero's more fanciful daydreams.

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One of the year's most personal films, unmistakably the work of its creator, is *Mamma Roma*, in which Pier Paolo Pasolini confirms that the cinema has now become his second form of writing, that he can control it as surely as he has done his other, literary, form. Perhaps this is just what limits *Mamma Roma*: the fascination of *Accattone* derived largely from the fact that the writer was aggressively discovering a new language, working his way towards it with occasional flashes of brilliance. *Mamma Roma* is "better written" and less anti-traditional; though this does not mean, as some critics have claimed, that it lacks vigour and imagination. The opening sequence affords evidence enough—the big, bare country room, with its plebeian meal and scampering pigs, and the whiplash exchanges between the prostitute, no longer young, her one-time pimp and his peasant wife; or those interminable tracking shots that accompany Anna Magnani's night wanderings, her senseless tirades, her improvised dialogue (as always with Pasolini, the dialogue is effective in a frothy, epigrammatic way); or the scene in which the boy is initiated into love-making, in a dusty country lane, by a little local tart. And there are other effective moments.

Magnani partly acts herself, but her portrait of an impetuous, feckless prostitute who, too late and without due thought, tries to build up a suitable life for her son, has the expected vivid exuberance. The figure of the boy (Ettore Garofolo) is drawn with affectionate insight and that of the pimp (Franco Citti) is drily and sharply outlined. Admittedly, here again are Pasolini's familiar contradictions between Marxism and Catholicism, between social awareness and romantic individualism, between realism and allegory—allegory which he carries to the extreme of showing the boy lying like an adolescent Christ crucified on his prison bed. As musical commentary Pasolini has used a good deal of Vivaldi, as in *Accattone* he used Bach. It seems odd for an artist of his



Pier Paolo Pasolini, novelist turned director, at work on his second film, "*Mamma Roma*".


calibre not to realise that this smacks of gimmickry, seeming to declare a weakness which in fact does not exist.

The films I've discussed here are only a selection from the 1962 record, though they do perhaps afford some idea of the present concerns of the Italian cinema, its social and psychological preoccupations, its almost invariable basis in realism. There is another film I must mention, for its curiosity value: *I Ragazzi che si Amano*, by Alberto Caldana, a director who already has a reputation as a documentarist. This is a film, using television-type techniques, made in the wake of Rouch and Morin's experiences with their *cinéma vérité*. Caldana's film is less broadly ambitious than *Chronique d'un Été*, but for that reason is able to dig further into its subject. He has taken four young people, two girls and two boys, all actors by profession, and has questioned them individually about the experiences of love and sex which have in various ways linked and divided them. The four lend themselves to the game (which was pretty serious, and revealing not just on the psychological level but as an indication of the customs and state of mind of a generation), analysing their own experiences and commenting on the others' with remarkable open-mindedness. The film cuts dramatically between these various confessions; and the examination concludes with a long final sequence, resolute in its concern for truth, in which the four are at last brought together and confronted with one another.

Translated by Isabel Quigly



# C L FILM P S



WELL, I LIKED BRESSON'S *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* anyway. I start in this rather aggressive tone because as far as I can make out most of my colleagues didn't take to it on first sight at the London Festival, and there seems to be a general air of disappointment even among the most enthusiastic Bressonians. This is hardly the place to argue the point: we seem to have tacitly agreed to hold both praise and blame till the film opens in London in the New Year. But meanwhile perhaps a few gleanings from Bresson's conversation while he was over here during the Festival may come in useful.

To anyone who feels as I do about Bresson's films, meeting him face to face is rather like a private interview with God; though he proves, admittedly, to be a God of remarkable approachability. Quiet, shy, smooth-faced and white-haired, he suggests some timid tree-dwelling animal lured temporarily to the ground. He does not strike one immediately as austere: "The cream over here is excellent," he murmurs, happily contemplating a well-garnished plate of chocolate mousse, and his enquiries about the best time for opening a film like *Jeanne d'Arc* in London are of a brisk commercial practicality far removed from one's conventional image of him. Nor does the picture of him as the meticulous calculator, for whom not one detail of film-making is left to chance, hold up for long either. "I improvise a lot on the set," he says. "With the *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, where I had a full script already prepared, I suppose for at least a third of the film I turned up in the morning knowing what I was going to shoot but only very vaguely how I was going to shoot it. In *Pickpocket* often not even that: with the actual pocket-picking episodes I didn't know what we would be doing until we did it."

But probe a little deeper and you hit the ascetic everywhere. "I hardly ever go to the cinema," he says apologetically when asked his views on some recent French directors. "I used to love the cinema, but now I just can't bear it. I hate to see actors on the screen, they all seem so wrong, so artificial to me. But even sitting alone in a silent cinema before an empty

screen I can't bear . . ." In fact the only younger directors he seems really aware of are Godard, of whom he approves ("I think anything which fights against academic rules and regimentation in the cinema is a good thing") and Malle ("Perhaps more intelligent but less inventive than Godard").

One is so used to the director who is mad about films and spends all the time he is not making his own films looking at other people's that an attitude so strictly hermetic comes as rather a shock. Even for his own films Bresson seems to cherish little personal affection. "After a year or two I hardly recognise my films; I don't feel like their parent any more. And then the copies: all scratched and broken—it is agonising to watch them. Six months after a film comes out practically all that is left is a travesty of the original." *Les Anges du Péché* and *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* are clearly the films of his which now hold least interest for him, mainly because, though he felt from the outset that the use of professional actors in the cinema was wrong, commercial considerations forced him to use them if he was to get financial backing at all. In the later films he seems still to take a detached sort of interest, but talks about them quite impersonally. When I suggested, for example, that I found *Pickpocket* less satisfactory than *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne* or *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé* because whatever interior qualities he intended the young man in the central role to convey did not in fact emerge, Bresson considered the idea without emotion and agreed that this might be so; though essentially Martin Lassalle was just the type he wanted for the role, perhaps the fact that he was not at ease in French (he comes from Uruguay) prevented this from coming over clearly to the spectator . . .

"Acting is for the theatre, which is a bastard art. The film can be a true art because in it the author takes fragments of reality and arranges them in such a way that their juxtaposition transforms them. Art is transformation. Each shot is like a word, which means nothing by itself, or rather means so many things that in effect it is meaningless. But a word in a poem is transformed, its meaning made precise and unique, by its placing in relation to the words around it; in the same way a shot in a film is given its meaning by its context, and each shot modifies the meaning of the previous one until with the last shot a total, unparaphrasable meaning has been arrived at. Acting has nothing to do with that, it can only get in the way. Films can only be made by bypassing the will of those who appear in them, using not what they do, but what they are."

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NO DIRECTOR COULD BE MORE DIFFERENT from Bresson than Michael Powell; the contrast, indeed, is such that it might provoke one of those splendid *Scrutiny*-style *ex cathedra* pronouncements: "One cannot like *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. If you believe you do, you are mistaken." Nevertheless I do. I have been devoted to the works of Michael Powell ever since—to make the judgment absurdly retrospective—I first toddled to what is still just about my favourite example of *le fantastique au cinéma*, *The Thief of Bagdad*. Well there, admittedly, it was Michael Powell and three or four other people, credited and uncredited, but the devotion has lasted on through *A Matter of Life and Death* and *The Red Shoes* and *The Elusive Pimpernel* and *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Gone to Earth* (there's a film *maudit* for you) and *Peeping Tom*. And I still think that in sheer prodigality of talent and cinematic flair Michael Powell is just about the most exciting thing the British cinema has produced since Hitchcock went West.

The reason for this particular outburst is the distressing experience of seeing *Honeymoon* in the mangled version which British Lion finally deigned to sneak into the West End without a press show. Not, I imagine, that even in its original state the film would have been vintage Powell. The story is the usual ballet-plot—why is it always taken as axiomatic that



ballerinas cannot combine dancing with a workable married life?—in an unusually silly variation, and the Spanish locations, though stunning, are perhaps a trifle over-indulged. But at least it all had a purpose originally: as the framework for two long ballet sequences—Antonio's version of *El Amor Brujo* and a new Massine ballet, *The Lovers of Teruel* (this, presumably, was the beginning of Ludmilla Tcherina's spectacular obsession with the subject). So British Lion wanted to shorten the film, and what did they do? But of course—cut great chunks out of the first ballet and reduce the second to a few disjointed and incomprehensible snatches. The lunacy of this is self-evident: who, except the few millions nowadays with a taste for ballet, is going to come to a film starring Ludmilla Tcherina, Antonio and Massine (oh yes, and Anthony Steel, sulkily loitering) anyway? But they certainly won't come if the dancing they came to see is cut to ribbons, and then to cap it all the film is advertised outside the cinema with stills from the vanished sequences. Still, no doubt the film will now be advanced as cast-iron evidence of what distributors have known all along: that culture doesn't pay.

I keep reading that Powell is planning an all-star film version of Greene's *The Living Room*. As will be gathered from the foregoing list, I personally prefer his lush, extravagant subjects, but all the same I hope it comes off, since it seems to me important, when we have a major talent, to keep him working. I know Powell makes mistakes—*The Queen's Guards* was about the biggest—and I know his taste, that pet shibboleth of English criticism, is often rocky. Admittedly, *The Tales of Hoffmann* was over-rich, opulent and vulgar, and the last episode was bad (mainly because it didn't go far enough); *The Elusive Pimpernel* was "a silly, tasteless burlesque" (of Baroness Orczy yet?); *Gone to Earth* staked everything on a wild and way-out brand of "un-English" symbolism; *Peeping Tom* was gloatingly sadistic. But at least they were films every inch of the way. Of how many British directors' works can one say as much?

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TALK OF MICHAEL POWELL REMINDS ME of a current oddity of the West End cinema, since a friend recommended *Diferente* to me as "a better Michael Powell film than Michael Powell ever made" (which isn't true but suggests the genre). "He was different" screams the advertisement; "... a chilling sense of evil power—*Films and Filming*." Actually the proceedings are rather jolly—the only real love interest is between father and black-sheep son; women (what little look-in they are permitted) are all vicious and destructive; and most of the film consists of dream ballets peopled with muscular young men shot mainly at thigh-height. The programme was completed by François Reichenbach's exploration of *L'Amérique Insolite*, which, even when finally it tears itself away from prisoners, army cadets, leather-clad motor-cyclists and juvenile delinquents (male) for the compulsory beach sequence, devotes far more close-ups to hairy chests than to burgeoning busts.

A quick skim through *What's On* offers further: *The Time of Desire* ("Strange, erotic Swedish film about two sisters whose gentle though physical love for each other . . ."), *Latin Lovers*, including "the tragedy of a young wife who discovers that her husband is homosexual," *Victim, Advice and Consent*, *A Taste of Honey*, *The Loudest Whisper* (which my favourite critical organ, *Films in Review*, characteristically attacked for asserting "that those who choose to practise lesbianism are not destroyed by it—a claim disproved by the number of lesbians who become insane and/or commit suicide"), *Blood and Roses* (and/or become vampires?); not to mention the valuable intelligence from Gala that "There are men . . . there are women . . . and then there is . . . *The Third Sex*." Even the London Festival offered a couple of more than usually equivocal triangles in *Il Mare* and *Knife in the Water*.

Nearly all of these demonstrate the old truth that in the



Bresson's "Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc" in production.

cinema there are only two ways of wearing a "problem"—as a G-string or as a crown of thorns—and that at the box-office they are more or less interchangeable. Will anyone ever make a film, instead, in which one of the occupants of that executive suite goes home without comment to a nattily suited young man, or the glamorous, dynamic star of a dozen Broadway musicals sits down at night without a reel of elaborately inexplicit soul-searching to a light supper whipped up by the fluffy little thing in the frilly apron? *Diferente* is fine, but perhaps producers figure that in box-office terms these particular moments of truth would be just a little too *diferente*.

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CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE DEPARTMENT. Since no one seems to know how, if at all, the work of Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins can be distinguished in the film *West Side Story*, I asked Wise recently. He says that the original agreement, reached after some months of delicate circling while they decided if they could get along together at all, was that Robbins should be in general charge of the musical sequences with himself there to advise and (usually) consent, while the dramatic sequences were to be his responsibility, with Robbins looking in and making suggestions. Before they finally had to part with Robbins and get the film finished (he evinced a Stroheim-like propensity for shooting every possible angle and not letting a single casual idea go by default), Robbins had directed the opening sequence, "America", "Cool", "I Feel Pretty". The rest of the numbers were directed by Wise but had been extensively rehearsed and planned by Robbins, and though Robbins was not present two of his assistants stayed on to help Wise. So now we know.

ARKADIN





"The Manchurian Candidate": captured and brainwashed, Shaw (Laurence Harvey) shoots down a fellow-soldier as a platform demonstration for Communist observers.

## FILM REVIEWS

### THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (United Artists) belongs to the new kind of anxiety fantasy of which Welles and Hitchcock were the outriders and Resnais, Franju and Rivette are the most extreme exponents. Not that I'm suggesting its director, John Frankenheimer, is necessarily as bent on resolving neurotic doubts as the French; the doubts, whether they be personal or just commercially alert, presumably belong as much to the novelist, Richard Condon, on whose book the film is based as to Frankenheimer. It is the complex, off-beat form of the film which classes it so interestingly with recent French exercises: neither satire nor suspense thriller nor science fiction fantasy nor identity-puzzle nor allegory but something of all five, its unreal characters essentially relevant to ourselves in the Cold War, its extravagant fears for the future rooted logically in the recent past.

Compared with the labyrinthine explorations of a Resnais or a Rivette, George Axelrod's screenplay progresses smoothly and clearly. It loves an enigma, and keeps its counsel, but such is its narrative mastery that one never feels actually lost or, which would have been unforgivable, finally cheated. The victim is Raymond Shaw, an unloved and unlovable American patrol-

leader captured by Communist troops in Korea and brainwashed according to Pavlovian techniques by a Manchurian psychiatrist with a lethal sense of humour. Passing a test, the murder of two of his men, with flying colours, Shaw is sent home a hero, and promptly confirms his automaton efficiency to the Communists by murdering his employer, a respected liberal columnist. As far as the Communists are concerned, the take-over of America no less (yes, this is a highly ambitious fantasy) can now be accomplished with fly-trap efficiency. The memory of what happened in Korea is obscured, for both Shaw and his similarly conditioned fellow captives, by amnesia. Shaw's step-father, the McCarthyish Senator Iselin, is the instrument and mouthpiece of Shaw's mother. And Shaw's mother eventually turns out to be none other than her son's undercover contact with the Communists in America. The enormity of the conspiracy reaches full flower with a Madison Square Garden political convention at which Shaw is to assassinate the presidential nominee and so pave the way for the Communists, through Iselin and Mrs. Iselin, to seize virtual control of America.

It sounds like the very worst sort of overheated, paranoid fantasy, but this isn't Frankenheimer's way at all. His treatment is richly atmospheric yet beautifully controlled, and bubbling over with all kinds of engaging touches and conceits which keep at bay any of that 1984 pessimism or slick hysteria one might expect to find in such a typically American nightmare. The neatly ironic idea of a McCarthy being *in effect* a Communist tool seems a perfectly logical extension of the facts as we now know them; that Shaw should be chosen by the Communists as their most promising executant in America makes perfect sense the moment his mother is introduced in full son- and husband-devouring cry; and the brilliantly withheld, and then subtly divulged, revelation that she controls not only her idiot husband but, unknown to both, her robot son is as psychologically satisfying as it is dramatically rounded off and effective.

But then Frankenheimer and Axelrod, joint producers of this refreshingly un-American film, are unfailingly inventive and apposite throughout. Tough-minded in a new, convincing way about the cannibalism of the American Mom or the TV techniques of the McCarthyite demagogue, they nevertheless retain a pointed sense of fun. The Chinese brainwashing expert, visiting a Red agent in America, compliments his host on the glumly Victorian décor of his sanatorium. Iselin, diverging wildly with every sentence in his accusations on the precise number of card-carrying Communists in the Defence Department, heaves a grateful sigh when his wife allows him to fix on an easy-to-remember 57—the number of Messrs. Heinz' varieties. Basically, though, the film's originality lies in the changes it rings on its central theme of identity. This comes partly through the dialogue ("Are you Arabic?" Sinatra casually asks Janet Leigh at one point), mainly through the protean incident and style. Again and again we are reminded of a masquerade: literally in a political fancy-dress party with Iselin got up as Abraham Lincoln and Shaw as a gauchito ("Gaucho Marx"); sinisterly in the corner-stone opening sequence, with the psychiatrist-lecturer and his audience changing back and forth into negresses or lady experts on hydrangeas and the camera performing 360 degree pans; explicitly in the character of the ubiquitous Chunjin (Henry Silva), a Korean who acts as a guide to the Americans, an agent to the Chinese Communists, and later a valet to Shaw in Washington. And why does Shaw play out the finale in clerical garb? It's all very intriguing.

The mixture of recognisable reality and brightly inventive grotesquerie extends to almost every detail, from murder to the nuances of behaviour. The script calls for at least six killings, including those of Shaw's wife and her father, and his own split-second suicide. In every case the visualisation is precisely right—anarchic, crisp, detached and shocking. The near-breakdown of Major Marco, who is the first to be "on" to Shaw, is sketched in fine, broken strokes—a couple of isolated facial twitches, a cigarette dropped stiffly as a corpse into a glass of whisky, sudden nausea on the way to a train's observation platform. Even décor plays its part: Iselin's reflection duplicates the facial outline of Lincoln in the glass of a portrait; "No" is chalked on a door without the expected "Admittance" to go with it.

Technically, as you may have gathered by now, the film is extremely well thought out. But Frankenheimer's control isn't just a matter of innovation, though there's plenty of that, and all-round proficiency. It is at its most promising—and he promises very highly indeed as a director—in the memorable performances he has got out of a conventional star cast. Laurence Harvey is unusually persuasive as Shaw, "controlled" by the Queen of Diamonds which shows up every time he plays solitaire, wandering like a sleep-



walker off the edge of a jetty into an ice-capped lake. Frank Sinatra gives one of his more unselfish and moving performances as Marco; James Gregory scathingly indicts the vanity of the blustering Iselin; John McGiver reaffirms his charm and cool, deflating wit as a left-wing senator. And there is always Angela Lansbury, monumentally towering as the monstrous mother-figure, right on top of and inside a part which could so easily have toppled over into caricature. It's difficult to see what Janet Leigh is doing in the picture, other than standing in, and most charmingly too, for romantic interest. There are other flaws perhaps—the slightly confectioned suspense of the political convention and the mercifully brief but none the less expendable speech underlining the heroism of Shaw's last act of contrition. Still, these are very minor errors, at odds with Frankenhimer's rare success in bearing all lightly as well as seriously, but in no way detracting from his overall achievement.

PETER JOHN DYER

## ZAZIE DANS LE METRO

LOUIS MALLE HAS A DECIDEDLY ECLECTIC TALENT. *Lift to the Scaffold* was a good strong neo-classic thriller, pioneering *nouvelle vague* work for which he has never received due credit; *Les Amants* a soft-centred, nebulous, romantic shocker; *Vie Privée* a tricked-up psychodrama which tried precariously to fit the serious, but mistaken, pretensions of Rouch into a framework of the purest Woman's Own true life story. Finally *Zazie dans le Métro* (Connoisseur), which although earlier than *Vie Privée* is the last of his films to arrive here, is a hectic farce derived from the novel of that name by Raymond Queneau. All this versatility is no doubt intended to illustrate the point that the cinema is a "total means of expression". In practice it seems to show that Malle thinks that he himself can do anything, and strongly invites the suspicion that the cinema for him is a sort of superior intellectual party game.

*Zazie* certainly seems to have been composed very much in this spirit. The object of the exercise is to produce an exact cinematic equivalent of the linguistic and literary phantasmagoria of Queneau, and as with the Latin verses some of us had to produce at school, the mental gymnastics involved is thought of not as a means to an end but as an end in itself. The film is consistently inventive but the invention is too often clever rather than funny. It is full of sophisticated jokes about the cinema which take the place of simpler jokes within the cinematic idiom. Like some of his contemporaries Malle seems too preoccupied with the *idea* of doing what he is doing to notice whether or not he is doing it right, or whether it is worth doing at all. Fortunately, however, *Zazie* is not quite as dispiriting as these words might suggest. It is not unrelieved French intellectual pretentiousness. It is funny, most of the time; it is always interesting; and towards the end, when Malle injects into the tone of anarchic frivolity which is that of the original Queneau a serious undercurrent of imminent apocalypse, it becomes suddenly spine-chilling and genuinely frightening.

The first two thirds of the film are pure farce: a non-stop stream of tricks new and old: changes of rhythm, variations of film speed, manifest incongruities and absurdities in space and time—everything that is funny in an old silent comedy is, in a second-hand way, equally funny here. But it is all mechanical. What is funny is the bag of tricks and the cinematic name-dropping—the old silent comedy not so much imitated as parodied, parodies of the modern cinema and even of Malle's own work (a snatch of Brahms on the sound track, which is meant to evoke *Les Amants*). In this whirlwind of gags the actual human beings get rather lost. The ten-year-old Zazie, on a brief visit to Paris, who lets fall the richest obscenities with dead-pan innocence, and the variously corrupt adult companions whose lives are disrupted by her appearance, are apparently just so much amusing material on which to build up a series of jokes about *le langage cinématographique*—and some of the more amusing side-lines of the *psychopathia sexualis*. In fact they should be more than that. The surrealist atmosphere induced by the flow of gags is meant to create the impression of a world of dissolution. Society, neurotically split between *bourgeois* and *bohème*, must expose its full idiocy before the calm eye of its childish judge: the nightmare of Paris is a microcosm of the whole world's nightmare. But this allegory, made explicit in the final sequences, is badly prepared for in the first

half of the film, so long as the spectator remains attuned only to the gags, and indifferent to the characters.

But when night falls on the second day of Zazie's visit, and the sundry protagonists of the picaresque episodes of the first part start to converge on a single point for the final holocaust, the complexion of the film alters suddenly. The slow rivers of traffic, the crowds, the lurid lighting—effects heightened by the obvious tricks of exposure and film speed—give an impression of strangeness and menace. The characters throw down their masks and prepare for battle. A fight develops in a café in which issue is squarely joined between the individualists, centred around Zazie's "homosexual" uncle, and the forces of organisation and authority. The mysterious Troussaillon, who has variously appeared in the roles of fake policeman and detective masquerading as satyr (or vice versa), is transformed into the image of the Fascist Beast, and the smooth waiters in the café become hordes of zombies. The fight itself is in the best slapstick tradition, but some of the images, like the entry of the fascists, are, in their surrealist context, quite horrifying; others, like the stripping of the aluminium and plastic café to reveal the original bourgeois interior, are a symbolic protest, and perfectly serious, against the cold uniformity to which modern cities are being reduced. Meanwhile Zazie has fallen asleep, and both the farce and the horror pass her by.

How much of this mixture of symbolism and cinematic name-dropping is worth laborious exposition? The answer, I feel, is very little—only the bare bones, perhaps, of what Malle is trying to do. If the whole of *Zazie* were as good as some of its ideas then the effort might be worth while. But the film is, in the last analysis, a failure. The mayonnaise of slapstick, parody and social satire is not homogeneous: the elements remain obstinately separate. But if you prefer even a curdled mayonnaise to pure vinegar or pure oil, then *Zazie* is well worth going to see. Besides, it is really quite funny, and there is no need to worry about the rest. Allegorical significance? As Zazie herself would put it, untranslatable, "Allégorie, mon cul!"

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

## THE TRIAL OF JOAN OF ARC

ARTISTIC MATURITY, THESE DAYS, is taking some unexpected forms. After *Nazarin* and *Viridiana*, one couldn't help wondering what there was left for Buñuel to say; then with *The Exterminating Angel* he flips back to his Thirties tone and still contrives to tell us something new. Renoir keeps on playing with his favourite themes and subjects, like some jovial grandfather with his old toys. Ford sends the cavalry out on another magnificent charge, without seeming to care very much about who his riders are. But with Robert Bresson the case is reversed: *Pickpocket* took him to an ultimate limit of



"Zazie dans le Métro": "the smooth waiters in the café become hordes of zombies . . ."



virtuosity. "You see," he seemed to be saying, "I can apply my vision to anything." And after the final fadeout one could only wonder where his cryptic and fastidious extremism would lead him next.

With a master-stroke of self-discipline, however, *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (Sebricon) looks for a way back to the essence of that vision. If it didn't sound dangerously like a paradox, one could say that here Bresson discards all the flourishes of his style. The film concentrates its action into 65 minutes; there is no Mozart mass or Lully on the harpsichord to add an extra dimension of spirituality; Bresson's images are more ascetic than ever; and there is no need for close shots of such mundane objects as the sharpened spoon or the splinters of wood which helped Fontaine, the prisoner, on his way towards a spiritual concept of freedom. This film is content with straightforward medium shots of people talking. Everything is stripped of decoration; the enigmatic faces, the settings of curtains and brick walls, the hole in the dark wall through which hostile eyes peer into the cell. Everything that is profane is only there to serve the sacred: the inner, spiritual drama. Even the blackness of the fadeouts suggests something solemn. To Bresson cinema means a church. And the scenes of Joan's repeated interrogations, composed with a splendour of mathematical precision, rise like the solid pillars sustaining the whole arch of the work. We move along under them as if in some ascetic medieval cathedral, advancing slowly and with echoing footsteps, hesitant and yet drawn on by the spiritual grandeur—irresistibly moving towards the altar, the culmination, the inevitable burning at the stake.

This sense of inevitability makes Bresson's film a very modern rendering of Joan's story. It is the product of an epoch resigned to its own false judgments. This Joan is tried by a smoothly running judicial machine. One interrogation succeeds another; the dialogue derives from the curt, accurate sentences of the trial record. An interrogation ends; the door slams behind Joan; the scene fades out. The key clatters in the lock; another interrogation; again the door slams; fadeout. The effect is to give the film a staccato rhythm and also to encourage the spectator to search for the links between the separate scenes. They are all part of the machinery; and it is very much a machinery of an earth which repeatedly proves that it is still not "ready to receive" its saints. . . .

"When will it be ready?" Shaw's Saint Joan asks. "How long, O Lord, how long?" Humanly and philosophically, this is a story filled with tremendous question marks. Joan's tragedy lies in her very agony between faith and doubt. An illiterate genius who puts her faith into her questionable visions and unquestionable truths, she stands there as an outcast, representing an idea the greatness of which she is unable to realise, and standing up for it until her last word—"Jesus"—from among the flames. This is perhaps the greatest story since Jesus Christ—and also one of the greatest plots for a tragedy, with the basic problems of human existence offering themselves up for interpretation, from Schiller to Honegger, from Shaw to Dreyer. But one thing, I feel, cannot be ignored: the tremendous human battle for certainty. And this is where Bresson fails to add the decisive final touch to the crystalline brilliance of his conception.

Is it because Joan's replies to Bishop Cauchon are made much too readily and easily? Or because her decision to sign the recantation—a culmination of the drama of doubts—comes too suddenly, with no real hint of the agonising choice that lies behind it? Or is inadequacy in Florence Carrez's performance the trouble? Inevitably, one brings with one a memory of Falconetti's close-up agony, the chapped lips and the slow tears rolling down her cheek. With a peasant stubbornness, Dreyer's Joan wanted to live; Bresson's Joan doesn't mind dying. When Joan sees the pigeons in Dreyer's film, you feel that she must leave something behind, something that would have been worth living for. But Bresson's pigeons flutter their wings above a world not worthy of such a sacrifice. Dreyer's heroine is left painfully alone; Bresson's is made lonely by Bresson.

Such comparisons between the two films are, of course, not really fair: Dreyer's is a *Passion*, Bresson's a *Procès*. But along with the juridical meaning of the word, there is also here a tremendous human trial. And Joan, "young, rustic, a woman of action, good-humoured, very pious, very temperate, a sane and shrewd country girl of extraordinary strength of mind and hardihood of body," does not easily lend herself to a merely enigmatic image. It seems that she is to be no more than another instrument put to the service of Bresson's vision. But Joan is no pickpocket. And this is exactly where this seemingly so Bressonian subject loses ground.

The characters of the country priest and the condemned prisoner gave us a key to the philosophical outlook, the spiritual territory covered by these films. The battle between the curé and the countess

was fought out in the soul but also on the ground. And in the light of these earlier films, Dreyer's Joan seems a much more Bressonian creation than Bresson's Joan herself. This is why the horrifying crackle of the flames may yield up some abstract intellectual or even spiritual message, but fails to burn, movingly and tragically, a flesh and blood human being and her truth. The cross at the end of *Journal d'un Curé* remains for me the more genuine symbol of that charred stake at which are burnt, one after another, those who have the courage to "hear the voices".

ROBERT VAS

## THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY (Contemporary/Gala) is the first of a trilogy of films in which Bergman is concerned to explore, more directly than before, the predominantly religious preoccupations that have never been far from the centre of his work. Yet in the treatment of this film there is a difference. If *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries* were both based on what is essentially an allegorical theme—Man in Search of Significance in Life—nevertheless, it was the way the films were developed on the narrative level that made this theme capable of affecting us so deeply. For in these films, along with Antonius Block and Isak Borg—men who have lost touch with their own human feelings and so with their sense of meaning in life—there are also a number of other characters, some of whom serenely embody the very qualities that these two men have lost and are looking for. Moreover, in these and other films (most delicately and most perfectly in *Summer Interlude*), Bergman gives us a wealth of aural and visual imagery: there are sounds of birds and rustling grass, shots of animals, and of trees and flowers, as of course there are the recurring small feasts of wild strawberries. And these images of life not only serve to oppose the emotional death which is at the heart of the films, but in the sensuousness of their aesthetic appeal, help to give them their emotional charge and to make them seem real. In Bergman's finest work, then, there has been a dramatic structure established out of the various elements contained in the films, the minutely observed physical detail generally counterbalancing the more abstract and often rhetorical nature of the central theme.

In *Through a Glass Darkly*, however, all this has changed. As in *So Close to Life*, Bergman has here decided to deny himself all but the most austere imagery, as he has restricted himself to four characters and has taken pains to observe the unity of time. But paradoxically, if this is aesthetically his most austere film, it is thematically his most self-indulgent; for in this barren island world that Bergman has created, there is nothing to offset what one wants to call the abnormality of the film. Here all the characters are distressed and inward-turning, and all but the myopic Martin speak in terms of God. David, the father, like Borg in *Wild Strawberries* and Block in *The Seventh Seal*, is a man who is in human terms a failure, who has sacrificed the warmth and reality of the physical life around him to the abstraction of his art. Martin, his son-in-law, whilst a somewhat indefinite figure in the film, seems substantially the same kind of man, and in his inability to be of any real help to his schizophrenic wife he escapes into the distractions of his medical career. And while David's son, young Minus, is tormented by his swelling sexual urges and by the sense of lack of contact with his father, Karin, his sister, is certifiably insane. In her schizophrenic condition, she retreats from the barrenness of the world around her into her private universe of religious/sexual fantasies where (as she says) "it is so warm and safe." When Minus tries to persuade her that these fantasies are unreal, she is quickly annoyed. For like the Knight in *The Seventh Seal* in his final appeal to the God who must be somewhere, Karin insists that her visions must be real, and to them she has sacrificed her husband. In *The Seventh Seal* we can sense the useless arrogance of the Knight's kind of intellectual religious demands, but here Bergman's attitude towards Karin's sick religious obsessions is difficult to understand.

Yet, as its title and opening epigraph imply, the film is supposedly about Christian love. Supposedly, because in *Through a Glass Darkly* love is less experienced than talked about. In the various characters in *Wild Strawberries* (indeed, within the evolution of the central character himself), we could see and thus respond to some of the many possibilities of love from selfish *eros* to Christian *agape*, so that at the end of the film there was really no need of any speech at all between old Borg and Marianne as they reached out and touched one another and thus expressed their new-found sympathy. Whereas at the end of this film, David must explain to his son that





"Through a Glass Darkly": the opening sequence.

love is all-embracing, that in fact God is love, and that even Karin, although she will be away from them imprisoned in her own insanity, will benefit from their love. But the film actually ends in physical separation, the characters even more than at the opening enclosed "each in his own cell." Karin has gone to hospital, Martin has returned to his work in town; and after the cold formality of David's closing 'talk' on love, young Minus asks if he may "go for a run." Even more than *The Virgin Spring*, and less justifiably, this film ends with the assertion of the validity of faith in love; and it is this verbally assertive quality shared by all the characters, plus the portentousness of the epigraph and music by Bach, which, despite the austerity of the visual images, gives *Through a Glass Darkly* its self-indulgent quality.

And yet supremely in this film, the images remain. The entire work has a sunless, end-of-summer atmosphere, while the uncertainty of the characters' relationship to the world they inhabit is suggested visually not only by the opening shot but by the repeated focusing on the slender promontory of a jetty stretching out precariously into the vast unknowability of the sea. And if aurally the film has a muffled quality, the very silence makes more startling the one shrill cry of a gull or the ominous tritonal antiphony of the fog-horns before the storm. And finally, there is the excellence of the acting, particularly here on the part of Harriet Andersson. If by the end of *Through a Glass Darkly*, we feel with some regret that Bergman has more asserted the value of love than demonstrated it dramatically within the film, nevertheless, in the uniqueness of his imagery and the intimacy with which he observes some of the details of these four people's lives, he succeeds in reminding us that he is still one of the most distinctive and compelling directors in the cinema today.

PETER HARCOURT

## THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

THERE WAS A TIME when, if someone started talking eagerly about "documentary", one knew more or less what he meant: he meant Rotha and Ivens and Pare Lorentz and Rouquier and so on. Not any more though: in the last few years the documentary has been so lushed up, whooped up, sexed up and generally mucked up that if one is going to talk about documentaries in the Grierson sense of the term one has to start with "By documentary, of course, I don't mean . . ."

By coincidence, three spectacular examples of what one probably doesn't mean recently opened in London at about the same time: *America through the Keyhole* (Gala), *Mondo Cane* (Gala) and

*World by Night No. 2* (Warner-Pathé). Or are they? That is the snag, for "documentary" is after all more of a state of mind than a form. By any standards *World by Night No. 2* is no documentary. "From Can-Can to Striptease" promise the posters, and that is more or less what the film offers: but its aim is titillation rather than instruction in the history of the dance, and this aim it no doubt achieves in its modest way. Admittedly the film is liable to turn away each time a hand is tentatively raised to unhook a bra, but the censor lets past a considerable amount of transvestism and apparently regards the sequence in which a curvaceous young woman gaily bends iron bars in her teeth with a lot of rather naive sexual innuendo as good clean fun. And who shall say he is wrong?

*Mondo Cane* on the other hand he clearly does not regard as good clean anything, since it made its first appearance here at a club cinema without a certificate at all. And *America through the Keyhole*, though less objectionable, was finally cut by more than half an hour to get its U certificate. This might be taken to mean that their intentions are more serious and therefore more upsetting to the conventionally-minded than the wide-screen strip-tours, or merely that they pursue sensationalism further, into nastier territory. On both, anyway, there seems to be a real difference of opinion.

For my part, I thought *America through the Keyhole* much the more interesting film—as far as one could judge from the mangled version shown here—and at least it has the advantage, if we are going to get moral about it, of being overtly and unashamedly one man's view, an eccentric, personal scrapbook of America. François Reichenbach's America is certainly *insolite*, as the less catchpenny French title has it, but there is no rule which says that an artist has to be fair, or offer a representative picture of his subject. Reichenbach clearly loves his dream America, a romantic image of everything the sophisticated, Europeanised American detests in his own country, and this is not by any stretch of imagination an anti-American film, though it may embarrass Americans by drawing excited attention to things they would rather forget. In short, if Reichenbach's principles of selection are the stumbling-block to our accepting him into the documentary fold, I don't think they need be. They are highly idiosyncratic, certainly, but the film I think genuinely reflects his view of the world: if it seems a sensationalised view, well, some people's are . . .

*Mondo Cane* is a very different kettle of fish (the phrase takes on a new and sinister significance in the context). To begin with, the film itself puts forward claims to objectivity ("The artist's job is not to sweeten, but to show the world as it is") when it is patently far from objective. Then, at the level of P.R. background material, we are assured that in fact it is the result of Gualtiero Jacopetti's brooding on the world during the dark night of the soul which followed the car crash in which he was badly injured and Belinda Lee was killed.



This may be true, but the film is far too flashy for one to feel that it is a very profound expression of one man's despair. To be fair, it is very competently done, if, like all feature-length films built up on a mosaic principle, too long and too shapeless. Some of the juxtapositions are strange and witty: the extravagant mourning at Pasadena dog cemetery next to groups of beaming Formosans consuming dog-meat specialities; the ritual fattening of wives for the chief in a south sea island with the ritual slimming of widows and divorcées in an American gymnasium; the cheap-food market of snakes and insects in Hongkong with the ultra-smart restaurant in New York where spoonfuls of fried ants make their expensive way down throats heavy with jewels. Most of the material seems to be genuine; only in one sequence—that in which the disorientated turtle on Bikini marches slowly inland to die—does one feel that the unit is there allowing something to happen which need not happen; and in one other—that in which Chinese festivities are intercut with scenes in a hospice for the dying—that the material is being deliberately distorted and manipulated to make a point which is not inherent in it. But the final result of *Mondo Cane*, because of what is left out rather than what is put in, is sensational. Harmless, I think, and even if it makes people shudder about, say, unnecessary cruelty to animals, conceivably in places salutary. But sensational because for the most part it plays on morbid curiosity, using the moral point it is ostensibly making about the world we live in only as an excuse.

Perhaps sadistic and masochistic impulses are better worked off in the cinema than in life; and in such terms *Mondo Cane* is a film which may or may not amuse you. It is certainly not, as it would be thought, a must (like *Le Sang des Bêtes* or *Nuit et Brouillard*) for people who care about the art of the film. *America through the Keyhole* is a cut above this, but even so it fits into the same category of entertainment; you choose your fetish, pay your money and wait for the ravishing to begin.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

## In Brief

**PRIVATE POTTER** (M-G-M) is the unassuming title of Casper Wrede's first feature film—a lively and honest expansion from the inside outwards of a television play by Ronald Harwood. Constructed as it is like a close-woven web of interviews strung between two key action sequences, it is not surprising perhaps that visual excitement is hardly one of its virtues. More remarkable is a deft encompassment of its dramatic situation, which shuns any temptation to impose cinematic exploitation of its theme not inherent in the original material—and the eloquence brought to it by Tom Courtenay's characterisation.

Within two weeks of finishing his role as the Long Distance Runner, Courtenay's face itself seems to have altered to become that of Private Potter. A man with quieter features and gentler ways, still deeply perplexed and capable of moments of ferocity and bitterness, seems somehow with some reserved part of him to be slowly digesting his experience of life. And life is at a crisis point for Potter, both outwardly and inwardly. As a regular soldier in peacetime, he is about to be court-martialled for unintentional sabotage. On an operation dependent for its success on absolute silence, he suddenly gave a loud cry. What made him do it? His answer causes a confusion and dismay which makes everyone wish the ponderous wheels of interrogation and judgment had never been set in motion. "I had a vision, sir . . . I saw God." His veracity may be questionable but his sincerity is not; and since Potter cannot explain himself in words the dilemma sets every specialist around him at loggerheads: the Soldier, the Preacher, the Doctor, the Psychiatrist and the Common Man. It exposes a flaw in each man's institutional ethic and bares his essential humanity, if only for the time being. At this level the film is a witty polemic, sharpened to dramatic effect (and a touch of theatrical farce) by pointed, intelligent playing.

But in Potter's various encounters with Authority and his stumbling attempts to communicate with the man beneath, there is a deeper poignancy. Here, in spite of a certain divorce between matter and manner which at times borders on banality (especially where the music makes an over-emphatic contribution to mood), the film takes on some of the qualities of an intimate psychological study. Under pressure from his own conscience, Potter gradually becomes more articulate. "I feel like I'd swallowed the sun and it's

burning me up inside." With more humility than insight, the Padre and the C.O. reserve judgment. But the former is beset by a nervous scepticism and a longing to share the experience: the latter by divided allegiances. They are powerless to help Potter understand himself and his confusion is extreme.

In this subjective context, an undertow of meanings is contained within a mute framework of gesture and expression, of actions paralleled in cross-cut sequence, of sets which convey a physical sense of Potter's predicament, from the timbered barracks where a matchbox can shatter the silence at inspection time to the Brigadier's sanctum where an amiably ironic camera-eye moves in from the chandeliers and alcove-vases to watch a man playing with a model of his island. Images in the exterior scenes add a dimension to Potter's struggle: a group of waiting faces beautiful in moonlight; a long view of mountains as he senses freedom; a race through sunshine and woodland. Potter is at the point between youth and maturity when a man needs to know who he is. After the cold and the cramp, the unnameable fears and coercions, the extremity of the moment has finally brought an explosive dawn of intelligence. By the time Potter has reached his own decision to compromise with society, we feel he has a fair chance of achieving spiritual autonomy.

ANNA YATES

A SKILFULLY CALCULATED EXERCISE in inverted sentimentality, **THE L-SHAPED ROOM** (BLC/British Lion) takes most of the ingredients of the fashionable new realism and polishes them up till they shine with all the gloss of a cosy old-fashioned romance. The result is a good deal more sophisticated than, for example, *The Wild and the Willing*; but like that deliciously absurd production, it seems to have drawn its inspiration from journalistic sources rather than from human experience. In this case, the journalistic sources are complacently middlebrow.

The novel by Lynne Reid Banks was a best seller, and no doubt this adaptation by Bryan Forbes will do well at the box-office: both book and film are much too long, but presumably those who like this sort of thing at all, like to wallow in it. It is about a "well brought up" young woman, pregnant after a loveless affair, who—with a certain amount of fastidious apprehension—takes a room in Notting Hill Gate. The bed has bugs in it and the house is inhabited by an avaricious landlady, an unsuccessful writer (in the book he was Jewish), a homosexual Negro, two prostitutes and an old Lesbian actress (Cicely Courtneidge—whatever next?). The girl



"How the West Was Won": John Wayne (Sherman) and Henry Morgan (Grant) in the Ford sequence.



decides to have the baby; gradually she comes to terms with her sordid surroundings; she falls in love with the writer, but when it turns out that he is too weak to assume the responsibilities of their relationship, she bears him no ill will. The central situation, and the heroine's honesty in face of it, stem from *A Taste of Honey*; the style and implied attitudes hark back to such sentimental boarding-house dramas as *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. While the atmosphere is resolutely "with it" (like a deb in a jazz club), the Negro and the prostitutes are treated in a manner that is unconsciously condescending. The heroine's courage, in itself admirable and touching, has an element of self-consciousness about it that alienates sympathy; the tone of both the novel and the film is emotionally self-indulgent to a degree that falsifies both the characters and the background, however well observed these may sometimes be in detail. Bryan Forbes directs with a heavy touch, which Brahms on the sound track does nothing to lighten.

While Leslie Caron is too graceful and composed to convince as a girl on the edge of despair, Tom Bell is altogether admirable as her touchy and irritating lover, the revelation of whose feebleness increases his attraction instead of diminishing it. The most interesting of the supporting performances is that of Cicely Courtneidge. This is in the good old vein of sentimental comedy-drama—a really juicy "character study"—and it is excellent of its kind. The fact that the performances of Tom Bell and Cicely Courtneidge (both so good, so far removed from each other in style) should exist in the same film, illustrates the double-think behind *The L-Shaped Room*. In its dogged attempts to combine the old theatrical conventions with the new social subtlety (one thinks of *Term of Trial*, anything by Dearden and Relph) is the commercial British cinema having its cake and eating it, or merely falling between two stools?

FRANCIS WYNDHAM

**HOW THE WEST WAS WON** (M-G-M/Cinerama). The music swells as the camera slowly tracks up an old Western street and discovers a group of pioneers sitting by a river bank. The two sides of the giant Cinerama screen still jiggle about a little, but this time the picture itself looks different—it is filled with actors who speak. So begins the first Cinerama story film: a big, boisterous, fully stereophonic spectacle with three directors, 12,000 feature players and extras, 77 sets and substantial hordes of Indians and buffaloes. Is this the ultimate in Hollywood elephantiasis? By the end of the first half one is inclined to fear the worst, although Henry Hathaway shows evident enjoyment in staging a hazardous river crossing and a free-for-all camp fight. James Webb's script spills out a vast number of characters but leaves most of them in the lurch, as it touches on all the favourite themes and myths from gold fever to dandified riverboat gamblers. But this is serio-comic history without any real sense of perspective; and in spite of several good performances one seems to be looking in on some gigantic carnival, filled with actor-puppets. The sheer size just doesn't help. The concentration on the screen's middle panel for the main dialogue scenes slows the tempo down considerably, especially when the conversation is so flat and non-atmospheric, and no one has attempted any experiments with triptych effects *à la* Gance.

After the interval, things change for the better. John Ford's all too brief sequence evokes the Civil War, and immediately one feels that the giant screen has been conquered. Reducing the three-panel compositions to the minimum, Ford produces a kind of family album of favourite images: horses splash across a dappled stream, soldiers dash diagonally from left to right, distant guns rumble ominously in the dark night. And there is a sense of the intimate as well, as Carroll Baker's hand softly caresses her son's shoulder before he sets off for the war. This is followed by a marvellous full screen shot of the boy and his dog vanishing down a country lane, which somehow recalls *The Young Mr. Lincoln*. The remaining two episodes (by George Marshall and Hathaway again) have enough sheer bravura to compensate for their basically commonplace storylines, including a splendidly dangerous-looking buffalo stampede and a shooting match on a moving train which pulls every railway gag from Keaton onwards and ends up in almost total destruction. All of this is done in Hathaway's most gleeful schoolboy manner.

Here, then, is a film with apparently something for everyone. Certainly its team of four ace cameramen have provided a full quota of visual splendours (like the forward-moving crane shot over horses in the Indian attack) and the rich colour definition in the long shots communicates an authentic thrill of pleasure. Yet, on the evidence of this first story film, with its unwieldy narrative and static groupings (plus one catastrophic piece of back-projection in the river



"Hatari!": Red Buttons, Elsa Martinelli and leopard.

scene), Cinerama remains, for me, less potentially exciting than the best Todd-AO or Technirama 70, both of which offer similar clarity and, of course, no dividing lines. Perhaps, if Ford had made the whole thing . . . —JOHN GILLET

THE CHARACTERS OF HOWARD HAWKS' **HATARI!** (Paramount) congregate at their Tanganyika game farm as if in answer to an Old Boys' and Girls' reunion roll-call. Itemising, there is the leathery misogynous veteran (John Wayne) who has stayed on at the farm to help out his orphaned teenage employer, Brandy (Michèle Girardon); the fist-flying rivals for Brandy's hand, one a German ex-racing driver (Hardy Kruger), the other a brash, chip-on-shoulder Frenchman (Gérard Blain); there is the sad but irrepressible Brooklyn harlequin (Red Buttons) whom Brandy eventually settles for; and, *de rigueur*, there is the sexually distracting intruder in this tightly-knit group, a press photographer (Elsa Martinelli) with a masculine signature, an androgynous nickname, "Dallas", and a boundless feminine ambition where apparently impregnable fortresses the like of Mr. Wayne are concerned.

Hawks has directed this safari romp with a great deal of care where the animal photography is concerned, with technical expertise and affectionate personal detail. The pre-credits sequence, in which a calm panoramic scrutiny of the terrain suddenly bursts into the first of several resoundingly tense rhino-chases, is highly reminiscent of the start of the trek in *Red River*; the emphasis on physical authenticity, on a job and the way one does it, recalls the best of all Hawks' action pictures. But the human material is as trite as it was in *Only Angels Have Wings* (from which, basically, it comes), only at twice the length. It is as if the plot hadn't been so much scripted as inked in on an elastic band, capable of being stretched over any required running time from 30 minutes to 3 hours. There is something chronically vexatious in the way this obviously sophisticated director is prepared to go on and on dispensing simplisms with such seasoned guile, such consummate, presumably shameless ease.

That *Hatari!*, for all its elements of self-parody, is never downright dispiriting is largely due to Hawks' tireless flair for buoyant comedy—witness Red Buttons' crazy stunt to catch a tree-full of monkeys with a net, visors and a home-made rocket; Martinelli's reluctant involvement in a tribal initiation ceremony; or her encounters with a tame *Bringing Up Baby* leopard and three rampaging baby elephants. There is also an unusually good score (Henry Mancini); and, always, there is John Wayne, a monolithic reminder of all that is durable, right and true about Hollywood's much-maligned star system. —PETER JOHN DYER



# THE LEGION OF

HERMAN G. WEINBERG





# LOST FILMS

THERE ARE THREE PARALLEL CINEMAS: (1) the films that got made and shown—which is the cinema we know; (2) the films that were never completed, or were released in heavily mutilated form or even never released at all; (3) the projects for films, often scripted but just as often only a dream for a film, which never got started. The subject of this article is category two: the “Legion of Lost Films”, the films that might have been, the “Legion of the Damned”, the true *films maudits* of the cinema.

## U.S.S.R.

The most important Russian film made before the October Revolution was Vsevolod Meyerhold's *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (1915), a daring and highly experimental work described by Jay Leyda in his book *Kino*, which unhappily is lost even to the Soviet film archives. (Only its scenario remains, in the Central Government Archives of Letters and Art in Moscow.) It contained 82 different scenes in its three reels. “Russian artists who saw it and then *Caligari* a few years later in Europe,” said Leyda, “tell me that if it had been shown abroad it would have surpassed *Caligari*'s reputation as a heightening of film art.” Typical of Meyerhold's original approach to the Wilde novel was his casting of the actress Varvara Yanova as Dorian Gray—with Meyerhold himself playing Lord Henry Wotton.

Dovzhenko's *EARTH* (1930) was circulated outside the Soviet Union for the most part with two sequences missing: the comic “re-fuelling” of a tractor by a bunch of peasants who urinate into the gas tank, and the tragic scene with Yelena Maximov as the wife of the collective farm organiser slain by a *kulak*, in which she hears the news of his death and tears off her clothing in grief.

Eisenstein's *jeu d'esprit*, *THE STORMING OF LA SARRAZ* (1929), co-directed by Hans Richter and Ivor Montagu from an improvised script by Richter, made while Eisenstein, Tissé and Alexandrov were attending an international film congress at La Sarraz in Switzerland. Jay Leyda describes it: “One of the delegates (Jeannine Bhoussinoussé, clad in a white robe with two empty film reels as breast-plates) was suspended with ropes from the topmost tower of the château where, as the spirit of the artistic film, she was the object for contention of two armies: that of Commerce, led by Bela Balasz in full armour, and that of Independence, led by Eisenstein, mounted on a projection table and tilting with both lance and projection apparatus. Other remembered warriors were Léon Moussinac as Wallenstein, Hans Richter as General Tilly, and Walter Ruttmann as St. George . . . Tissé had to shoot the entire allegorical jest in a single day, because the outraged hostess demanded a stop to the congress's eccentricities. The short but uncut film was lost in some Berlin film vault.” Richter has still-photographs from it in his private collection.

Around this time, Eisenstein is also reputed to have made, on a dare—to turn out a film in an hour—a one-reel Oriental burlesque, whose only props were a Turkish rug, a couple of potted palms, and a cooch dancer. Made obviously in a spirit

## PART TWO

of high euphoria, this may well be among the rarest of all film incunabula.

The story of *QUE VIVA MEXICO!* (1930-31) has been told many times, so this report will confine itself to some hitherto unpublished details. Eisenstein, Alexandrov and Tissé (with the ethnographic aid of their two Mexican assistants, Agustín Aragon Leiva and Adolphe Best-Maugard) shot 234,000 feet during their 17 months in Mexico. Approximately 15,000 feet were utilised in two features made from this material, Sol Lesser's *Thunder over Mexico* and Marie Seton's *Time in the Sun* (which she put together with Paul Burnford), and two shorts, *Death Day* and *Eisenstein in Mexico*, both of which seem to have disappeared. Jay Leyda utilised an additional 25,000 feet in editing rushes taken from this material for study purposes (circulated by the Museum of Modern Art in New York); leaving about 194,000 feet which still reposes in the vaults of the Museum of Modern Art, a gift from Upton Sinclair, who backed the venture initially and then reneged on it while the picture was still unfinished (the *Soldadera* episode remained to be shot)<sup>1</sup>.

Just as one should remember the names of the few who saw the total footage of *Greed* (Sam Goldwyn, who initiated the venture for the old Goldwyn Company, Louis B. Mayer, who inherited the film after the Goldwyn Company merged with L.B.'s Metro Films, Irving Thalberg, June Mathis, head scenarist of M-G-M, the director Rex Ingram, the journalist Idwal Jones, the scenarist Harry Carr), it is as fitting to set down the names of those who saw the total footage of *Que Viva Mexico!* at the Consolidated Laboratory projection room at 7000 Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood, week by week for months as the rushes, which arrived periodically from Mexico for processing, were unreeled to this small but astonished “audience”: Upton Sinclair, of course, his brother-in-law Hunter Kimbrough who accompanied the Russians to Mexico to “supervise” things, Chaplin, the Russian writer Boris Ingster who subsequently stayed on in Hollywood to become a scenarist and director, Seymour Stern, the still photographer Le Roy Robbins, Christel Gang, of the Experimental Cinema magazine staff and translator of the first edition of Pudovkin's book on film direction, the Mexican poetess Maria Luisa Yerby, and Alexander Brailovsky, described by Stern as “not the pianist, Brailovsky, but another, an ex-piano teacher and admirer of Eisenstein who was even left of the Trotskyites. To him, Trotsky was a conservative.” This was the motley crew that watched from morning till night, whenever rushes were being shown, the 234,000 feet shot by Eisenstein, Alexandrov and Tissé.

The same year that Eisenstein worked in Mexico, the Georgian Mikhail Kalatozov wrote (from an idea by Sergei Tretyakov), directed and photographed (with M. Gegelashvili) one of the strangest and most powerful of Soviet films, *THE SALT OF SVANETIA*, all but unknown even in Russia and completely unknown to the Western world. Shot in the Caucasus in the community of Svanetia high in the mountains, it was the record of a strange remnant of a medieval culture. Leyda links it with Buñuel's *Land Without Bread*: “Both are surrealist in the literal sense of the term, both with a harsh pity for the



tragedies of their subjects that is far more moving than any appeal for sympathy . . . Even a catalogue description suggests a surprising film: 'Life is patriarchal, primitive; the struggle for existence among the snow-capped mountains entails such constant want and hunger, and particularly, the tormenting hunger for salt, that each new birth is regarded as a terrible curse, while death becomes a solemn feast. Bloody offerings are made at the graves of the dead; horses and cattle are slaughtered in honour of their pagan gods, Salema and Dala.' The late American critic, Harry Alan Potamkin, saw the film at several stages of its making and described it at length in "The New Kino" in the March, 1931 issue of *Close Up*. In the German invasion of the Caucasus, the negative appears to have been destroyed, though a print survives in the Gosfilmofond archives.

In 1935 Eisenstein began BEZHIN MEADOW, his first sound film, derived from an incident in Turgenev's *Leaves from a Hunter's Notebook*, from a script by Alexander Rzheshhevsky contrasting the Russian peasant child as Turgenev knew him and as he had become. The central figure in Rzheshhevsky's scenario was modelled on a real boy, who organised the children so well to guard the harvest on a collective farm that the sabotage planned by his *kulak* family was threatened and they killed their boy, now an enemy of their class. After two years' work, and despite revisions in the script made by Eisenstein and Isaac Babel to conform with changes in official policy, work was halted on the film by Boris Shumiatsky, head of the Soviet film industry. Reason: "Dangerous formalistic exercise . . . ideological confusion . . . intellectual Don Quixotism," etc. The conception, argued Shumiatsky, was not founded on the class struggle but on the conflict of elemental forces between "good" and "evil".

The late Austro-Russian journalist Leo Lania, who saw rushes of *Bezhin Meadow*, said: "It was Eisenstein's greatest work . . . The most tragic and horrifying indictment of man's inhumanity to man, a terrible example of political fanaticism which turns father and son into deadly enemies." Shumiatsky cited a scene which Eisenstein significantly entitled, "Smashing the Church" . . . "A highly stylised almost mystical depiction of peasants in a frenzy of destruction, tearing down icons, breaking altar vessels, swaying rhythmically to the broken tune of a revolutionary marching song. Yes, he presents in this scene a veritable bacchanalia of destruction and the collective farmers as vandals . . . Among the personages in the film we find not images of collective farmers but biblical and mythological types. The chief of the political department is portrayed as a man with immobile face, enormous beard and the conduct of a biblical saint. The young pioneer's father, a *kulak* tool and a bitter class enemy, instead of being endowed with the features of the real enemy, appears like a mythological Pan stepped out of a painting by the symbolical Vrubel . . . The central figure of the film, Stepka, the patriotic pioneer, is given in luminously pale tones, with the face of a consecrated holy child with a quasi-halo of light radiating over his head . . . The film was not based on the class struggle but on the struggle of elementary forces of nature; the class struggle was given biblical features."

Of Eisenstein in this connection he said, "He is the image of backward elements among our creators to whom order in creative work and responsibility for its result seem devilish . . . This atrocious situation demanded interference by the Central Committee of the Party." The film cost 2,000,000 rubles (\$400,000 at that time) up to the point where work was stopped, making it the most expensive in Soviet film annals. A special version was to have been made by Eisenstein for children. He offered to remake the film to conform to the criticisms, saying that Hollywood frequently remade films before all concerned were satisfied. It was to no avail.

Scene of the funeral of a child in Naples, cut from most versions of De Sica's "Oro di Napoli".

Between 1929 and 1938, nine years, nothing by Eisenstein appeared on the screen, despite almost a decade of work and the thousands and thousands of images shot on *Que Viva Mexico!* and *Bezhin Meadow*. It was not till the end of 1938 that he was redeemed by *Alexander Nevsky*; for which he received both the Order of Lenin and the Stalin Prize.

The following year, Eisenstein began FERGHANA CANAL (1939) from a script by himself and Pavlenko (Prokofieff was to have done the music score). The film was planned as an epic history of Central Asia, from antiquity to the present, having its climax in the building of the great canal in Uzbekistan which was to make a desert bloom again as in its ancient fertility before the sands took over. Its structure was episodic like that of *Que Viva Mexico!*, set in three widely separated periods: antiquity, before the Revolution, and the present. "There was one exploratory filming expedition to the chief location," says Leyda, "before the project was dropped. This footage was edited into a short documentary film on the opening of the canal." The rumblings of war, Leyda feels, may have had something to do with it. He refers to it in his *Kino* as an "extraordinary" project.

(IVAN THE TERRIBLE, Part Two, almost became a "lost film." When Marie Seton tried to see it in Moscow in 1952 she was told it was never shot.)

Finally, American readers of SIGHT AND SOUND should be informed that TEN DAYS (*October*) and OLD AND NEW (*The General Line*) were both distributed in the U.S. in heavily cut versions<sup>2</sup>. And film *aficionados* everywhere will doubtless be intrigued by the reputed existence of a pre-*Strike* Eisenstein film—THE DIARY OF GLUMOV—which after being "lost" all these years has suddenly turned up, according to my informant, in a cinémathèque in Belgrade.

## ITALY

Roberto Rossellini's LA MACHINA AMMAZZACATTIVI (1948; The Machine That Kills Bad People). The "machine" was a camera. I have seen stills but never met anyone who saw the film. It was the only film missing from the recent Rossellini retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

De Sica's ORO DI NAPOLI was released with one of its several episodes missing: "A Child is Dead", depicting the funeral of a child in which the cortège is composed of children bribed by candy to follow the coffin.





## CANADA

Norman McLaren's *NEIGHBOURS* (1952), an anti-war morality fable about two men with adjoining houses who fight over the possession of a flower blossoming on the "demarcation" line of their properties, had its most powerful scene cut—of the killing of each others' families before they kill each other—on the grounds that "it was too strong" for audiences to take. Besides, such a scene from the gentle McLaren was unexpected and was therefore doubly shocking; but of course this was exactly why McLaren did it—it made his searing point.

## SWEDEN

Mauritz Stiller's *KONSTANTINOPEL* (1924), starring Garbo.

## JAPAN

Kurosawa's *THE SEVEN SAMURAI* was cut in Japan before its release to approximately a third of its original length. The few who saw Kurosawa's original have described it as one of the world's finest films.

## GERMANY

G. W. Pabst's *DER FALL MOLANDER* (1944, Terra) with Paul Wegener and Irene von Meyendorff, from the novel *Die Sternengeige* by Alfred Karrassch. A month after filming began in Prague, the Russian push westward sent the whole company fleeing back to Germany, with the film abandoned.

The most heavily censored Pabst film was *THE DIARY OF A LOST GIRL* (1929, HOM Film) with Louise Brooks, Valeska Gert, Fritz Rasp; the director's last silent picture. Not even in Germany was it shown in its complete version. The Cinémathèque de Belgique is reputed to have a complete copy, though, in its archives.

Alexander Granowsky's *LE ROI PAUSOLE* (early Thirties) from the novel by Pierre Louys about a jolly king of a Mediterranean isle who had 365 wives, one for every night of the year, began as the ill-starred venture of a rich European woman who "wanted to do something artistic in the cinema." The emigré Russian stage director who worked as a film director in Germany (his best was perhaps *Das Lied vom Leben*) cast Emil Jannings as the concupiscent king, and 365 of the prettiest girls were ferried out to the island where for weeks the company disported themselves, continually wiring their now frantic backer to send more money until the poor woman committed suicide as the only way out. Needless to add, the picture was unfinished, though a good time seems to have been had by all on the island. The stills I have seen looked very amusing with a kind of "Lubitsch aura" and a striking visual handsomeness about them.

Hans Richter's *METAL* (1931-33, Prometheus, Berlin—Mejrabpon-Russ, Moscow). Scenario and direction: Richter. Photography: Katelnikoff. Assistant: Ogonosov. Begun as a feature-documentary on a strike in Henningsdorf, it developed as events progressed into a semi-documentary political film on the rising tide of Nazi hooliganism in Germany, exposing Nazi strike-breaking and murder methods. The production, filmed in Berlin, Moscow and Odessa, was abandoned before the last two reels were shot, shortly after Hitler came into power.

Another unfinished Richter project was *THE LIES OF BARON MUNCHHAUSEN* (1939), a satire about an outrageous liar whose lies, nevertheless, are understatements of what is happening in the world today. Shrewdly envisaged as a "screen" behind which things would be suggested that could not otherwise be said, the script was by Jacques Prévert, Jacques Brunius and Maurice Henry. Jean Renoir recommended the film to his company for distribution and a contract for 3,000,000 francs was signed in Paris, where casting began. Preparations for sets began in Muenchenstein but the war ended the project.



"Le Roi Pausole"; story of "the jolly king of a Mediterranean island who had a wife for every day of the year."

The legendary German silent epic, *HOMUNCULUS*, consisting of seven feature films, like a super-serial. Who made it? When was it released? Who saw it? No existing film history that I know of mentions it, yet I was told about it by a German friend who claims to have seen it—all seven parts... He could remember no details save that it was the most awesome spectacle he'd ever seen...

These are by no means all the "lost films", but they are representative of some of the most notable examples. Their corollary is the list of equally notable projects for films by these directors, and others of their stature, which never even reached the filming stage; as, at least, the above listed titles did. But that is another—and even more harrowing—story.

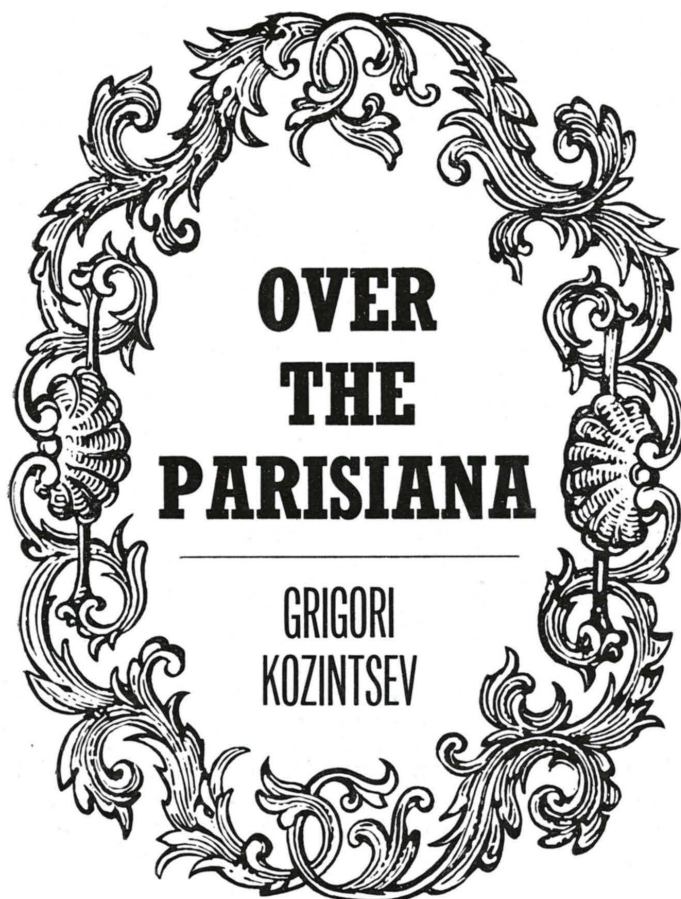
### NOTES

(1) I have now learned that the Museum of Modern Art received 14 massive wooden crates from Upton Sinclair containing 420 reels of *Que Viva Mexico!* footage. A print of *Death Day*, celebrating the frenetic *Calaveras* holiday, exists there, as well as a two-reel subject, *Zapotec Village*, edited from the Tehuantepec sequences, and a six-reel feature, *Mexican Symphony*, composed of miscellaneous material from most of the sequences of the three "novellas", prologue and epilogue shot by Eisenstein.

Recently I screened, through the courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, 43 reels of footage printed up from the original negative of *Que Viva Mexico!* most of which appeared neither in any of the features and shorts made up previously from this material, nor in the four hours of study-material compiled by Jay Leyda... Thousands of feet of the exotic flora and fauna of Mexico, fiestas, bull-fights, ritual dances, village and city life, Mayan and Aztec temples, churches and cathedrals, additional *Calaveras* (*Death Day*) material, the army, police, fire-fighter battalions, dignitaries, the coastal areas, plains, mountains, jungles, the flower-boats of Xochimilco, etc. It contains the most astounding cinematography I have ever seen. Many short reels, printed up but not yet spliced together for screening, also exist in the Museum archives—and who knows what remains to be revealed in the mass of negative not yet printed?

(2) Cut from the original version of *Ten Days* by the Soviets themselves were all scenes showing Trotsky, who in Eisenstein's complete version was one of the heroes of the October Revolution along with Lenin. (A brief shot of him remains in the scene at the railway station where he sits with Lenin, whose face is bandaged—a disguise—as if he had toothache.)





*This fragment from Grigori Kozintsev's memoirs, titled The Deep Screen, was first published last year in the Soviet journal Novyi Mir. The translation is by Jay Leyda.*

*Kozintsev came into the cinema in the early Twenties, after his work at FEX (the Factory of the Eccentric Actor) with Trauberg and Youtkevich. With Trauberg he made such prewar Soviet classics as The New Babylon and the trilogy The Youth of Maxim, The Return of Maxim and The Vyborg Side. In 1957 he directed a CinemaScope Don Quixote, with Cherkassov. When he visited London several years ago, Kozintsev was already doing research for a screen Hamlet; and news has recently come from Moscow that he has begun work on this long-planned project. The music is by Shostakovich, the translation is Pasternak's, and the film will be in CinemaScope.*

SOON AFTER ARRIVING IN Petrograd from Kiev we and Youtkevich were invited to show our work in a group exhibition. We selected our drawings and attached slogans to them with the intention of exciting people about the "street arts": posters, handbills, the circus. One of the serious critics grew indignant as he read all these appeals. On leaving he remarked warningly, "if you go on like this you'll be claiming that the movies are an art!"

We were dismayed. In this same exhibition there was a painting that was listed in the catalogue as "Opus 6". It was a panel that had been smoothly painted an even, muddy pink. Its creator stood before it. A young girl asked him:

"What did you feel when you conceived this opus?"

"I felt I had to paint this surface—and so I did."

The whole experience gave us little joy.

Our group broke up. Kapler returned to the Ukraine. Youtkevich got a job as designer at Foregger's theatre in Moscow. The only adult among us—Kryzhitsky—left before the others, after writing a harsh review of our work.

Trauberg and I wandered into cinema. It had become clear to us: all our aspirations were somehow connected with this particular art, even though we didn't know where to go, or who could give us advice. Somewhere we ran into a knowing assistant director, who shook his head—"It's hopeless."

Nevertheless we wrote a scenario. At a film studio we got as far as the receptionist: he looked us up and down, saw that we didn't fit his idea of what writers should look like, and told us, "We don't need any scenarios."

"Who does need them?" we asked.

"Go to the Twenty-fifth-of-October Prospect"—his manner had softened—"You know the 'Parisiana' cinema? Right over it is 'Sevzapkino.' They read scenarios there."

Looking back now, the address seems symbolic. Even then the names sounded wonderfully confused. "Parisiana" was a name that evoked certain images, identical in market-place or boulevard: a man in evening clothes, with eyebrows lifted to an extraordinary height, and a lady with exaggerated arms against a background that suggested luxury. While the name "Sevzapkino" exploded in the face of such figures, like underground dwellers rising up against the lordly residents above.

We went upstairs to the fourth floor, passing posters of *Bianca the Adventuress* and *Satan Triumphant* and photographs of Harry Piel in side-whiskers.

The secretary—a long-haired youth in a leather jacket—sat in a sparsely furnished room, spreading out art postcards on the table: Greek sculpture, Rembrandt portraits, ancient coaches. The young man received us warmly; in a few minutes we were addressing each other as "thou" and within half an hour we were friends.

We learned that the secretary was a student at the Institute of Screen Art, and that the postcards were being arranged for the Red Corner there. This was no mere "cultural measure," as they say nowadays, but a fighting matter, a preparation for attack. The young man had entered the Institute after working with the Cheka, in the struggle against smuggling. The first thing he heard at the school was the salutation "gentlemen"—it sounded habitual. He angrily ran to Smolny, and two more komsomols were thereupon ordered to the film front. These three organised a communist group at the school, and this Red Corner was only their beginning.

And it really was only a beginning. The secretary, whose name was Friedrich Ermler, did more than a little to bring the word "comrade" into cinema.

For the present he was hoping for success as an actor; he had been promised a role in a short film to be called *Tea*. He thought he'd be just right for the role: thus the long hair and the leather jacket. He claimed some practical experience: back in Rezhitz all free time from his job at a chemist's (he was an errand-boy there) was spent at a photographer's studio where he dressed in a frock-coat, fixed a chrysanthemum in his lapel, and was then photographed in the poses of the film he had seen on the previous evening. His best photographs were labelled "In imitation of Maximov," "As Runich might do it," or "With the smile of Garrison."\*

The film-makers of the future Lenfilm Studio were already gathered in the city where they were to make *Chapayev*, *A Great Citizen*, *Baltic Deputy*, though they had not yet recognised their vocation, or their colleagues.

Sergei Vasiliev, glued with various beards and wigs, runs and waves his arms through twenty tiny roles in *Palace and Fortress*. Five years were to pass before he makes his own first film.

And Josef Heifitz is trying to write reviews for *Worker and Theatre*. He doesn't even dream about film direction, nor does he know that this same year an enthusiastic student is graduating from the Tennis school—Alexander Zarkhi.

A young fellow just arrived from Sverdlovsk is strolling the

\*Three of the frock-coated idols of the Russian film public; "Garrison" was the Russian distributors' name for the Danish star Valdemar Psilander.



streets; he stops by a pillar covered with posters to read the announcement of a studio-school; art attracts him, but he has no idea where it can be studied. Soon Sergei Gerasimov will notice the poster of FEX and will come to join us.

In Moscow an actor or, in the term of those days, a "model", is being filmed in *The Adventures of Mr. West*—Vsevolod Pudovkin; Eisenstein is rehearsing *Gas-Masks* at Proletcult. A Kharkov newspaper has a new cartoonist, Dovzhenko.

I have before me the programme of Petrograd's cinemas for these months. On these screens there is not one Soviet film . . .

Ermiler, with his long, tousled hair and a triumphant expression on his face, overwhelmed us. The scenario was accepted. This was almost incredible. One of Sevzapkino's directors said, "What nonsense!" Another sounded resentful, "What's eccentric about this? I've just come from America—I know what eccentricism should be." A third director, Boris Chaikovsky, unexpectedly remarked that this comedy seemed a good idea to him. The chairman of the "scientific-artistic" council firmly declared: We need new scenarios, new genres, new powers. They decided to produce the film. Chaikovsky was appointed its artistic supervisor. We were to be his assistants.

I show my pass at the gate, I walk by the receptionist and enter the film studio. I work here now.

\* \* \*

1924. Sevzapkino had one small studio that had been neither greenhouse nor photographer's studio. The walls were glazed; though screened by iron panels the lights sprayed splinters of hot carbon on the scared actors. The studio staff included three directors and two cameramen: these were specialists, experienced, according to their lights, in film-making before the revolution. Technical equipment: two old Pathé cameras.

When visitors came, they were taken at once to the wardrobe room. The studio head who led the excursions never neglected to display some improbably large chamois pants. This was no ordinary underwear—these were historical pants; Alexander III wore them when he went riding. The costumes were kept in fine order. The interminable racks held cloaks of Nikolai I's time, with grey beavers, guards uniforms, hussar jackets, dolmans, glittering epaulettes, golden embroidery heavy with buttons, braid, piping—cocked hats blossoming with plumage, lacquered shakos bristling with tufts and feathers. Double-headed eagles clutched at the helmets of cavalry guards; from the velvet of the display cases gleamed jewelled stars, orders, medals, badges.\* Here, silent and perfumed with naphthalene, was the very heart of the films that this studio produced.

Experienced wardrobe mistresses dressed actors in these uniforms; the make-up man stored up enough beards and moustaches for the whole royal house of the Romanovs; a palace hall was set up in the studio—and then all this wealth was placed before the camera, and lit "frontally" by the carbon lamps. A man resembling a tsar ordered—in long and eloquent subtitles—that the revolutionaries be sent to prison to rot; adjutants came to attention with clicking heels; then a panopticum of greater and lesser princes, ministers, courtiers, all "absolute likenesses," all "just like life," would gracefully withdraw past the columns, draperies, and porcelain vases on polished redwood pedestals.

Later, along beautiful streets that were always photographed like postcard views, galloped cossacks, brandishing whips; along other postcard views ran a crowd that might have been recruited from an opera chorus. The hero-lover, his eyes ringed with dark grease-paint, struck heroic poses in a case-window, and the female victim of tsarism—a queen of

\*In the Thirties all this wealth was sold as useless property. It was sold suddenly, with no particular thought, neither to the costume theatres, nor to the amateur clubs.



A scene from Kozintsev and Trauberg's *"The New Babylon"* (1929). No stills, unhappily, seem to exist from the period Kozintsev writes about in this article.

the screen—wept glycerine tears. There were only three camera positions: beginning by taking the whole scene, the camera was then brought a little closer to film "middle shots" and, more rarely, close-ups.

In those years the very atmosphere of Sevzapkino seemed foreign to art. The masters of cinema moved at a leisurely pace, enjoyed generalised instruction, and loved to abandon themselves to reminiscence. They made it clear that they possessed certain magical secrets of their profession, but they mentioned them evasively. Now and then they made lofty artistic pronouncements, but they showed a more sincere interest in anecdotes about scenarios that were written on a cuff during a gay supper, or about films made overnight in someone else's set (for which the studio watchman had been bribed).

This atmosphere had nothing in common with our Kiev rehearsals under Marjanov or the white-hot passions of young painters who could not imagine a world separated from the world of art.

In our studio everyone was positive about everything. Doubts on any subject were unthinkable. Experienced people continued in their familiar ways, and nothing but organisational defects excited anybody. It was clear which films would show profits, and which would show losses; what turned out well on the screen had nothing to do with how it was filmed. The experience that allowed these people to judge everything with such assurance was the experience of the pre-revolutionary cinema; though organisations had changed, old tastes and habits had not. The pre-revolutionary cinema had adapted itself to historical-revolutionary subjects.

Aesthetics had no connection with "Sevzapkino"; we were still bound to the "Parisiana".



# BOOK REVIEWS

**JEAN RENOIR**, edited by Bernard Chardère. Illustrated. (Premier Plan, Lyon. 18 NF.)

**RENOIR, MY FATHER**, by Jean Renoir. Illustrated. (Collins, 36s.)

THE APPEARANCE OF A 405pp. book on Renoir is a mouth-watering prospect, almost as pleasant as stumbling on *The Diary of a Chambermaid* or *Swamp Water* in some unsuspecting flea-pit. The *Premier Plan* monograph, alas, is a sad disappointment whichever way one looks at it, despite some useful documentation. In order to achieve a measure of objectivity in examining "le cas Renoir", the book is not written by one person, but assembles a motley collection of articles, some hostile, some friendly, some contemporary, some retrospective, some mere gibberish. They are so disparate, in fact, as to cancel each other out, although linked together by editorial comment; while the editorial hand effectively suppresses any objectivity by firmly steering the material to a desired end. The delightful *Chotard et Compagnie*, for example, is dismissed in a sneering editorial note and a single hostile review which manages to distort the film by totally disregarding its characteristically Renoiresque ending.

For Bernard Chardère, Renoir is a great director from the thirties who sank during the war to a series of pot-boilers in America, and afterwards babbled senilely back in his native France. Supposing (while secretly nursing adoration for the pot-boilers and babblings) one admits for the sake of argument that there is an argument here, one finds that there is little variation from the critical norm on the early films (*La Règle du Jeu* great, *Toni* and *Crime de M. Lange* as well; *Nana* liked; *La Chienne* perhaps a trifle underrated; some perceptively sharp things said about *La Grande Illusion*), until one comes to the two least-known films from that period, *Madame Bovary* and *La Vie est à Nous*. *La Vie est à Nous*, made as a collective enterprise celebrating the proletariat and the Front Populaire of 1936, evokes a paean of praise and lengthy analysis; while *Madame Bovary*, equally neglected, technically one of Renoir's most important films, and, even in the mutilated version shown, a masterpiece, has to get by on a briefly approving note which makes no apparent distinction between it and the later, unhappy Minnelli version. Here one realises that the monograph is desperately trying to stuff Renoir into a prefabricated social-realist cage, while Renoir, like his father before him, resolutely refuses to be stuffed. To reject, as Chardère does, the pleasure of *Tire au Flanc*, *Diary of a Chambermaid*, *Le Carrosse d'Or* or *Testament du Docteur Cordelier*, is to savour only half a director.

*Renoir, My Father* is not really about Jean Renoir at all, except in so far as the last chapters amount to a sketch for his childhood autobiography, but the complete man pervades every word of it. Fairly heavily anecdotal (the kind of anecdotes which stick out like sore thumbs in most biographies), this memoir of his father is constructed like so many of his own films, an apparent rag-bag of unconnected jokes, incidents, sudden insights, memories and moments of sheer sensuous pleasure, which suddenly, miraculously, effortlessly, fall into place as a masterpiece. Lovingly, and seemingly with total recall of everything his father ever told him, he digs down and down until he manages to reconstruct his complete artistic personality and credo.

The fascinating thing about the book to anyone interested in the cinema is the way in which a portrait of an artist is built up which not only fits Renoir the painter, but into which Renoir the film director slips equally completely and snugly. *Renoir, My Father* is, in fact, a perfect autobiography and manifesto. Towards the end of his life, the painter spoke to his son about his own serenity as an artist: "When you are young, you think everything is going to slip through your fingers. You run, and you miss the train. As you grow older, you learn that you have time, and that you can catch the next train.

That doesn't mean that you should go to sleep. It is simply a question of being alert and not getting nervous." Jean Renoir comments: "The pursuing 'hunter' which was one side of his nature did not slacken, indeed was destined never to disappear. Until the day of his death Renoir remained 'on the watch for the motif'. But now the game allowed him to approach with less fear, having discovered that the hunter's buckshot was love continually renewed." I cannot think of a better comment on Renoir's own later films.

TOM MILNE

**THE EDISON MOTION PICTURE MYTH**, by Gordon Hendricks. Illustrated. (University of California Press/Cambridge University Press, 32s.)

WHO INVENTED CINEMATOGRAPHY? Certainly not Edison, Mr. Hendricks tells us in great detail in this well-produced but very expensive American university paper-back. He states his aim in the first sentence of his preface: "A beginning of the task of cleaning up the morass of well-embroidered legend with which the beginning of the American film is permeated and . . . to afford some measure of belated credit to the work done by W. K. L. Dickson." Dickson was a young Englishman whose imagination had been fired by accounts of Edison's inventive genius while he was still in his 'teens. He wrote to ask for a job in the Edison laboratories, was refused, crossed the Atlantic the same year with his mother and two sisters, and eventually succeeded in becoming the sorcerer's apprentice. He ended up as his right-hand man on the motion picture project which produced the kinetoscope, a kind of peep-show machine for viewing moving pictures. The myth that Mr. Hendricks is out to demolish is that Edison created this first, crude form of cinema, and that subsequent developments in his workshops were mainly due to his own efforts. Dickson himself appears not to have minded his master getting all the glory, for in 1894 he wrote a fulsome biography of Edison in an almost grotesquely florid style. A year later he left Edison to make a projector for the Latham brothers and eventually formed the Biograph Company, which became Edison's bitterest and most successful rival. Mr. Hendricks only takes his story up to 1892, when Edison had taken out patents for his peep-show machine and a film camera.

He has done an awe-inspiring amount of work for his book, sifting through archives, letters, Patent Office documents and contemporary newspapers, tracking down dates and exposing errors with detective-like thoroughness. As a result, he claims that most of the work on the kinetoscope and the camera was done by Dickson, basing his work on that of men like Muybridge and Marey, and that Edison knew very little about the principles of motion-picture photography, and wasn't very interested anyway. It was only when Edison became convinced of the commercial value of the invention that he relentlessly pressed his claims through the courts as he fought the "patents war" in an attempt to monopolise the early American cinema. It is really not surprising that he should have claimed credit for the cinema: his commercial success depended largely on his public image as a scientific wizard. Dickson was his employee; the products from the workshops had to be sold under Edison's name. A great deal of the "motion picture myth" has already been dispelled by previous film historians, who have told how Edison acquired a projector from another inventor when he needed one quickly, and presented it to the American public as "the Edison Vitascope".

Besides re-appraising Dickson's work Mr. Hendricks quotes important documents, gives an impressive number of original sources and lists many errors made by Dickson himself with regard to his achievements. He also lists over sixty mistakes committed by Edison's latest biographer, Matthew Josephson, in the latter's chapter on the kinetoscope. It will certainly take another equally enthusiastic film historian to disprove any part of Mr. Hendricks' thesis. Anyone who now wants to write a new history of the film's beginnings will have to read this book. A question does, however, remain. What would Dickson's place be in the history of the cinema if he had *not* worked for Edison?

R. A. RUDORFF

## BOOKS RECEIVED

CHAMPAGNE FROM MY SLIPPER. By Ruby Miller. (Herbert Jenkins, 21s.)

HOLLYWOOD IN TRANSITION. By Richard Dyer MacCann. (Houghton Mifflin, \$3.95.)

MONITOR. Edited by Huw Wheldon. (Macdonald, 18s.)

OLD ACQUAINTANCE. By David Stacton. (Faber and Faber, 18s.)

PICTURE. By Lillian Ross. (Dolphin Books, 95c.) *Paperback edition.*



## CORRESPONDENCE

### The Legion of Lost Films

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Just a few comments on Herman G. Weinberg's fascinating "Legion of Lost Films".

Mr. Weinberg says von Sternberg's *The Exquisite Sinner* was remade as *Heaven on Earth* by Phil Rosen, implying that the first film was never released. I saw *The Exquisite Sinner*, under that title and with von Sternberg still credited as director, in my home-town of Winnipeg. I have no doubt it was mutilated and probably partly re-shot, etc. and certainly don't recall it being very good at all. Later, I saw a different movie called *Heaven on Earth*, also with Renee Adorée and Conrad Nagel, with Phil Rosen billed as director—but had no idea at the time it was supposed to be a remake of *Exquisite Sinner*. Anyway both of them were shown.

I'm not clear as to who wrote the "Notes" at the end of the article, but Note (1) says that "much more must have been cut from *The Merry Widow*" than Mr. Weinberg states—then lists as evidence a number of "existing stills" of material presumably missing from the film itself. To what print or version of the movie does this refer? I'm sure I have seen several of these items any time I've seen *The Merry Widow*—not all, but at least the "nuptial night and sudden death of the Baron Sadoja from an apoplectic stroke"; parts anyway of the "wild party and orgy thrown by the Crown Prince Mirko"; certainly "sly sidelights of Prince Danilo's attempted seduction of the dancer" (the blindfolded musicians, etc.); these are all familiar bits to me. Maybe they're missing in a British print?

I saw Murnau's *City Girl* in Winnipeg—at a double-bill "action house" fleapit. As far as I can recall, about the last reel had been remade as a "talkie" by some unbilled director—the rest (what was left of it) was all silent with a music soundtrack and recognisably Murnau, very interesting and sympathetic with, indeed, "some intensely lyrical footage." The story as I saw it dealt with a farm boy who meets an unhappy waitress in the city, marries her and takes her home—the remainder of the film detailing her adjustment to the rural life, her bouts with narrow-minded bigotry and misunderstanding, etc. I remember a fan magazine (*Photoplay*, I believe) reviewing it as "one of the tragic casualties of the changeover to sound." It played I think at the Monroe Theatre in Chicago, and received "four stars" from the Windy City's lady reviewer, Mae Tinee.

Welles' *Mr. Arkadin* ran for one week at a semi-art house in Toronto several years ago. It was billed as *Confidential Report*, so must have been the version shown in Britain. I saw a version of *Lola Montès*, with English subtitles, at the Montreal Film Festival over a year ago. Though not in the complete original length, it appeared to have been "re-constituted", as the story was told in flashbacks as Ophuls intended, and not "chronologically" as the mutilators had it—a really happy surprise.

I don't know what Mr. W. means when he says that "a satirical *Private Life of Helen of Troy* came out subsequently" (after the abandonment of a projected Laughton version). The only one I ever heard of was a silent of the late Twenties, based on John Erskine's novel, made by Korda in Hollywood and starring his wife Maria Korda, with Lewis Stone as Menelaos and Ricardo Cortez as Paris.

Yours faithfully,  
G. G. PATTERSON

10, Bowden Street,  
Toronto, Ontario.

HERMAN G. WEINBERG writes: I don't know what version of *The Exquisite Sinner* Mr. Patterson saw in Canada, but the facts as I presented them were gleaned directly from von Sternberg himself (via conversations and from his autobiography *Guide to a Labyrinth*) and from Robert Florey, who saw the original version and also the "remake", *Heaven on Earth*. It may be that a mutilated version of the former was shown in Canada, and, if the latter looked nothing like it, that was doubtless the chief trouble with it.

The footnotes at the article's end were by me. The deletions from *The Merry Widow* referred to were from the original version before it was cut by M-G-M under the aegis of Irving Thalberg and Louis B. Mayer. Mr. Patterson errs in thinking he saw any of the footage

I refer to, because the released version of the film which I saw on its opening night in 1925 in New York contained none of the scenes for which I have stills. I verified this recently at the George Eastman House archives in Rochester, where a complete release print exists. For instance, missing from the "nuptial night" of the Baron is the arrival of the couple at the Baron's home (in which the décor is all black, as in Des Esseintes' home in Huysmans' *A Rebours*), the wedding feast on a dais strewn with flowers, the spindly valets of the Baron after the feast joking about the Baron and his latest conquest, the disrobing of the bride by the Baron's hunchbacked maid (Dale Fuller), the entrance of the Baron on the arms of another of his sepulchral valets, the overturning in his paroxysm of the cabinet of women's slippers—the hoard of years, he was a foot fetishist—the grabbing by the Baron of his bride's bedroom slipper so as not to be cheated out of his bride, finally the entrance in a macabre parade of a retinue into the master bedroom of the dying Baron, the last one of which is a gaunt cowed nun carrying a hot-water bottle. (For further verification, see the description of this scene in Don Ryan's *Angel's Flight*, a novel of the Twenties. Ryan played the adjutant to Crown Prince Mirko in the film and was close to von Stroheim throughout the filming) . . .

The version of *Mr. Arkadin* shown in New York turned out to be substantially the same that I originally saw in 1955 except that the main and credit titles were re-done here in conventional form. In Welles' original—and I offer this for the benefit of American readers of SIGHT AND SOUND—the credits were printed against a background of wheeling bats.

The so-called "reconstituted" print of *Lola Montès* that Mr. Patterson saw in Montreal at the festival there in 1961 (I saw it there, too) is, in fact, an original version preserved by the Cinémathèque Française, who lent it to the festival for a single showing.

Finally, Mr. Patterson does succeed in tripping me up in the matter of *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*. It was a silent film, of course, and came out long before the abandoned Laughton project. I'm grateful for this correction.

### Guns and Fiddles

SIR,—With reference to the very interesting article, *The Legion of Lost Films*, in the Autumn SIGHT AND SOUND, there is at least one more film that was started but never completed, namely M-G-M's *Guns and Fiddles*, based on an old European story, *Lyra und Schwert*. This was to star the soprano Miliza Korjus, who made a sensational debut in *The Great Waltz*. Shooting began on schedule, but Korjus met with an automobile accident and was laid up in hospital for over nine months, and the film was abandoned. This film was also to star Robert Taylor, with Irving Thalberg directing. Herbert von Karajan wrote the complete film score.

Yours faithfully,  
M. PEARMAIN

11 Rockleaze,  
Sneyd Park,  
Bristol, 9.

### Made in Britain

SIR,—The praise that has been bestowed on such films as *Saturday Night*, *A Taste of Honey*, *A Kind of Loving*, shows how poor British films are. Like all serious British films, these three are deficient in the only qualities that elevate films into the realm of art—imagination and depth. (Perhaps these two qualities are one and the same.) Your argument is (Spring 1962 issue) that these films may lack the true cinematic qualities of some of the continental and even a few of the American films because British film makers are scared to depart from the written book or play. Sure they are, but why—if not precisely because they have no filmic minds of their own? And look at their choice for the British *nouvelle vague*: a sordid tale about a moronic factory worker and his sexual adventures with the wife of a workmate; the pathetic pregnancy of a schoolgirl from a sailor pick-up; a commonplace wooing and seduction against the hideous background of the Industrial North. True, these films were redeemed to some extent by first class acting and they also have a certain freshness, because they have never been done before, not in Britain. But, compared even to the American films of the Thirties, they look what they truly are—amateurish stuff.

Even from the standpoint of realism they don't meet the test. The moronic factory worker in *Saturday Night* would never get as far as saying: "All I'm out for is a good time—all the rest is propaganda." The story of *A Taste of Honey* moves forward solely because of unconvincing chance meetings (with the sailor and the homo-



sexual). The seduction scene in *A Kind of Loving* looks false because these seductions usually take place on the impulse of the moment—girls don't undress naked for them and fellows don't go into bath-rooms to titivate themselves in preparation. It looked too "set". And so I could go on picking realistic holes. But what does that matter? British films have not yet reached the point on the art ladder where they can look down and pat themselves on the back. Far from it—they haven't even equalled the impact of a plain, down to earth documentary, *The Way Ahead*—in my opinion the finest British film ever made.

Yours faithfully,  
GEORGE CAMDEN

### Marienbad

SIR,—Three cheers for Jacques Brunius's highly intelligent and stimulating article *Every Year in Marienbad*, which has brought some much needed common sense to bear upon the "perplexities" of this controversial film. Surely M. Brunius has now proved conclusively the fallacy of suggesting, as, for instance, your correspondent Mr. Colin Moffat suggests, that *Marienbad* is "the perfect example of fantasy at its most objectionable—over wrought, private and pretentiously enigmatic."

Nevertheless, though I endorse wholeheartedly each of M. Brunius's observations, I hope I am not being too British in reserving some doubts as regards the statement, "I am now quite prepared to claim that *Marienbad* is the greatest film ever made, and to pity those who cannot see this." This seems to me a surprisingly parochial view, depending entirely upon one's concept of what constitutes great art. M. Brunius is perfectly at liberty to prefer *Marienbad* to, say, *L'Avventura*, just as one might prefer Proust (particularly relevant in this instance) to Tolstoy, or Joyce to D. H. Lawrence. He is even at liberty to think *Marienbad* greater art, but then this is surely a personal point of view; there is no need "to pity those who cannot see this." It is possible, I believe, to appreciate both Resnais and Antonioni, just as it is possible to appreciate both Joyce and Lawrence, without one being necessarily inferior to the other. M. Brunius is merely being loyal to his principle of aesthetics in championing *Marienbad* above all other films.

Yours faithfully,  
N. J. DAVIS

20 Manor Place,  
Edinburgh, 3.

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## JEAN-LUC GODARD AND VIVRE SA VIE

continued from page 12

which dovetail together into a compelling, deeply moving, utterly unsentimental portrait which is as pitilessly revealing as an X-ray: Nana trying to cheat her concierge; Nana in the cinema moved to tears by Falconetti's agony in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*; Nana blithely shaking off a stranger, although she has made him pay for her seat at the cinema; Nana casually agreeing to spend the night with a photographer who may help her career, but afterwards picking up her first client and struggling to avoid his kisses; Nana desperately trying to borrow money from everyone, but suddenly closing up in pride when someone asks if it is a matter of urgency; the strangely uncomprehending grief in her cry against the woman who lays a police complaint against her *after* she has returned the stolen money; the callous efficiency with which she operates as a prostitute, and the joyous innocence of her dance in seduction of the young man in the billiard saloon; the calm tenderness with which she contemplates the young soldier and his girl just at the moment when she is taking the first step to prostitution; the assurance with which she accepts responsibility for her own life ("I believe that one is responsible for what one does . . . and free. I raise my hand, I am responsible . . ."); and the odd, anguished feeling in her dialogue with the philosopher that, for all her acceptance, she senses there is something she has not quite grasped in her life.

The film is constructed, in a sense, in three movements, starting from the exterior shell, and moving in to the long central documentary sequence on the facts and figures of prostitution, where Nana, as a prostitute, is shown to us reduced to the status of an object. And finally, the crucial last phase of the meetings with the young man with whom she falls in love, and with the philosopher who confirms her re-awakening to the need to be something more than an object.\* At the same time, the film is built on three levels, and it only works properly if the three levels are seen together. Firstly, as a story about a woman who becomes a prostitute and is shot by gangsters. Secondly, as a total portrait of a woman. Thirdly, as a deeply personal statement by Godard himself. For Anna Karina, who plays Nana, is Godard's wife, and it is Godard's own voice which is dubbed on for the young man in the idyllic love scene of the last episode. It is therefore Godard himself who reads the Edgar Allan Poe story about the artist whose portrait of his wife became so perfect that, when it was completed, her life was transposed to the portrait, and she died.

Here we have an imaginative statement of Godard's conception of the film, and also a pointer to the rôle of the last scene—the shooting of Nana—which has already been much criticised as "arbitrary", and a cheap thriller climax. On the story level, it is arbitrary. On the portrait level, it is less so, because Nana has been reduced to an object, and has just become aware of this when she dies. As the philosopher suggests in his conversation with her, "Speech means almost a resurrection in relation to life, in the sense that, when one speaks, one exists in another life from when one is silent." Nana, at the end of the film, has just "spoken about herself," and because she has been inextricably caught up in the life of silence (i.e. prostitution), that life must get rid of her. But it is on the Poe/Godard imaginative level that the ending is really essential. For if the film has completely and truthfully captured Nana's portrait, then her life will be transferred to the portrait, and she *must* die.

\*It should perhaps be noted that the copy distributed in Britain has been mangled for reasons of censorship. A good deal of Chapter 10, where Nana tours the hotel rooms—many of them in use—looking for another girl to help with a client's special demands, has been cut. This sequence is extremely important as a link between Nana's meeting with the young man and her conversation with the philosopher. Its rôle in the film is indicated by its title-summary, "Le bonheur n'est pas gai."



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 UNITED ARTISTS for *The Manchurian Candidate*.  
 WARNER-PATHE for *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*  
 PARAMOUNT for *Hatari!*  
 BRITISH LION for *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*.  
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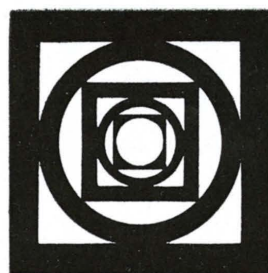
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# A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars

- BARABBAS** (BLC/Columbia) Most morbid and one of the most eclectic of current cycle of Italian Biblical spectacles, based on the Par Lagerkvist novel. (Anthony Quinn, Vittorio Gassman, Jack Palance; director, Richard Fleischer. Technicolor, Technirama 70.)
- \*\*\***BEAU SERGE, LE** (Gala) Chabrol's first film, late in turning up but still looking good. Village location, Decae photography, and excellent performances by Blain and Brialy, as the drink-sodden Serge and the boyhood friend who tries to redeem him. (Michèle Meritz, Bernadette Lafont.)
- CAPE FEAR** (Rank) The film of 161 reputed cuts. Vengeful ex-convict Robert Mitchum wages a war of nerves on the lawyer who put him away, hounding his wife and daughter with a single-minded view to rape. Efficiently nasty, nastily efficient. (Gregory Peck, Polly Bergen; director, J. Lee Thompson.)
- \*\*\***CLEO** (Sebricon) On the longest day of the year, fear of death prompts a young woman to a discovery of the meaning of life. Moving and elegant debut of Agnès Varda, 34-year-old godmother of the New Wave. (Corinne Marchand, Antoine Bourseiller.)
- \*\*\*\***ECLIPSE, THE** (Gala) More in the line of *La Notte* than *L'Avventura*, *The Eclipse* examines the problem of sex without love in the milieu of the Rome stock exchange. Directed by Antonioni with great pace, concision and—need one add—rigour. (Monica Vitti, Alain Delon.)
- \***EL CID** (Rank) Solemn pageant about the noble Spanish knight who united Moors and Christians under one king. A likeable cast struggles with two-dimensional characters, and there is an arid hour or two between the film's highlight—a mounted single-combat scene—and its final battle; but Anthony Mann's compositions are often pretty. (Charlton Heston, Sophia Loren, John Fraser. Technicolor, Super-Technirama 70.)
- GIGOT** (Fox) Jackie Gleason's attempt to step into Chaplin's boots, playing a much-persecuted mute who befriends little children and animals. Sad to see this good actor going down under a flood of sentimentality. (Katherine Kath, Gabrielle Dorziat; director, Gene Kelly. DeLuxe Color.)
- GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS!** (Paramount) Lightweight, sunnily escapist vehicle, for those who prefer Elvis Presley's *Blue Hawaii* persona, skilfully tailored by the same director, Norman Taurog. A dozen songs; cute début by Laurel Goodwin, who looks like a potential Doris Day. (Stella Stevens. Technicolor.)
- \***GYPSY** (Warner-Pathé) Rosalind Russell as the ultimate in stage mothers, parent of Gypsy Rose Lee and June Havoc, in screen version of the Broadway musical. No holds barred performance from Miss Russell, and a creditable innocent-into-stripteaser from Natalie Wood. (Karl Malden; director, Mervyn LeRoy. Technicolor, Technirama.)
- \*\*\***HATARI!** (Paramount) John Wayne rhino-hunting and romance-dodging in Tanganyika with an engaging company of Hawksian characters. Expert Technicolor photography; ingenuous and attenuated script. (Hardy Kruger, Elsa Martinelli, Red Buttons.) Reviewed.
- \***HOW THE WEST WAS WON** (M-G-M/Cinerama) Bulging with stars and shivering at the seams, the first Cinerama story film mixes eye-catching spectacle with slabs of static narrative. Ford's Civil War sequence comes closest to taming the giant screen. (Debbie Reynolds, James Stewart, Carroll Baker; directors, Henry Hathaway, John Ford, George Marshall. Technicolor.) Reviewed.
- IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS** (Disney) More latter-day Disney than Jules Verne, but the tidal waves, giant condor, giant Ombu tree and sheets of lava should be enough for even captious children. Hayley Mills and Maurice Chevalier head the search party; George Sanders intervenes as a mutinous mate. (Director, Robert Stevenson. Technicolor.)
- INTERNS, THE** (BLC/Columbia) Young doctor steals drug to end girlfriend's pregnancy by another man; another falls in love with Eurasian girl suffering from incurable disease; a third conducts an affair with not-too-young but influential nurse. Ben Casey and Dr. Kildare have nothing on these interns. (Cliff Robertson, Michael Callan, James MacArthur; director, David Swift.)
- \***ISLAND, THE** (Curzon) Long, slow Japanese *Man of Aran*, minutely detailing the hopeless struggle for existence of a farmer and his family on a waterless island. Holding, but flawed by the director's refusal to let his characters speak. (Nobuko Otowa, Taiji Tonoyama; director, Kaneto Shindo.)
- \*\*\***IT'S ONLY MONEY** (Paramount) An occasionally surrealist, almost always funny skit on private-eye thrillers. Jerry Lewis, at the mercy of a homicidal butler who proudly claims presidency of the Peter Lorre fan club, ends up pursued by an army of one-eyed, shark-toothed lawnmowers operated by remote control. (Zachary Scott, Joan O'Brien; director, Frank Tashlin.)
- KID GALAHAD** (United Artists) Elvis Presley tries his Lil'Abner comedy turn again, less successfully this time, as the uncouth but chivalrous boxer who gets involved with gangsters and girls. Slick, edged playing by Charles Bronson and Lola Albright. (Gig Young; director, Phil Karlson. DeLuxe Color.)
- \*\*\*\***KNIFE IN THE WATER** (Contemporary) A yachting weekend in Poland, with tensions slowly building between husband, wife and the young hitchhiker they've invited aboard. Nervously taut and brilliant first film by Roman Polanski, co-director of *Two Men and a Wardrobe*. (Leon Niemczyk, Jolanta Umecka, Zygmunt Malanowicz.)
- \***LIVE NOW, PAY LATER** (Regal International) Valiant, often accurate, sometimes witty attempt to pin down the world of pressure salesmanship and the never-never under a satirical microscope. Undercut by the old disease of caricature, but Ian Hendry is alarmingly credible as the super-salesman. (June Ritchie, John Gregson, Liz Fraser; director, Jay Lewis.)
- \*\*\***LOLITA** (M-G-M) Not exactly the film of the book, but quite an achievement just the same. Brilliantly controlled playing by James Mason and coolly resourceful direction by Stanley Kubrick hit off the tone aimed at: comedy with a powerful undertow of desperation. (Shelley Winters, Peter Sellers, Sue Lyon.)
- \***LONGEST DAY, THE** (Fox) Solemnly spectacular reconstruction of the D-Day invasion of Europe. A host of stars—American, British, French and German—appear fleetingly, but with Darryl Zanuck as commander in chief, only a handful get hurt. (Directors, Ken Annakin, Andrew Marton, Bernhard Wicki. CinemaScope.)
- \***L-SHAPED ROOM, THE** (British Lion) Trials and tribulations of a pregnant French girl in a London lodging-house overrun by picturesque characters (old troupier tenant; prostitutes; Negro, etc.). British movie realism advances somewhat uncertainly on the Fulham Road. (Leslie Caron, Tom Bell, Cicely Courtneidge; director, Bryan Forbes.) Reviewed.
- MONDO CANE** (Gala) World trip designed to show that everyone is as uncivilised as everyone else, with cruelty to animals, cruelty to humans, dog-eating, pig-beating, etc. Some smart reporting, but overriding impression of nausea for nausea's sake. (Director, G. Jacopetti.) Reviewed.
- \***MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY** (M-G-M) Directionless, in every sense, remake of Frank Lloyd's old film. Trevor Howard makes Bligh a believably obsessed, class-conscious puritan; Brando's Fletcher Christian rocks the boat with an often funny but over-indulgent impression of an aristocratic fop. (Richard Harris; director, Lewis Milestone. Technicolor, Ultra Panavision 70.)
- PHAEDRA** (United Artists) Melina Mercouri and Anthony Perkins in Dassin's rip-roaring attempt to bring Greek tragedy into line with the world of ship-owning tycoons. "She loved me like they did in the good old days," cries Perkins before his final sports car crash. (Raf Vallone.)
- \***PORGY AND BESS** (BLC/Columbia) Otto Preminger at his most laboured and loftily detached. Straightforward version of Gershwin's Negro opera, several years late in reaching us, and strictly for the director's and composer's fans. (Sidney Poitier, Dorothy Dandridge, Sammy Davis Jr. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)
- \*\*\***PRIVATE POTTER** (M-G-M) Promising first film from Casper Wrede, expanded from the play he directed on TV about a soldier who sees a vision while on an army patrol. Some sharp writing, and another good performance by Tom Courtenay. (Ronald Fraser, Mogens Wieth.) Reviewed.
- SODOM AND GOMORRAH** (Rank) Unexpectedly tame, even prudish Biblical spectacle in the current Italian mould; one goodish battle, and a vestigial show of dignity from Anouk Aimée as Sodom's queen. (Stewart Granger, Stanley Baker, Pier Angeli; director, Robert Aldrich. In Colour.)
- \***STORY OF PRIVATE POOLEY, THE** (Contemporary) East German-British co-production detailing the history of Private Pooley, survivor of an S.S. massacre of British prisoners during the Dunkirk retreat. Factually careful; dramatically a bit under-developed. (Garfield Morgan, John Rees; director, Kurt Jung-Alsen.)
- \*\*\***THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY** (Contemporary) Back on the Bergman beat with the significance of God, life and love demonstrated by a tormented family of four isolated on an island. Self-indulgently resolved but visually splendid, and with a brilliant performance by Harriet Andersson as a schizophrenic visionary. (Gunnar Björnstrand, Max von Sydow.) Reviewed.
- \*\*\*\***VIVRE SA VIE** (Miracle) A meditation on existence, in twelve chapters of the biography of a girl who sells her body but keeps her soul. Godard's most personal film and a tribute to Anna Karina, who gives a remarkable performance. (Sady Rebbot, André S. Labarthe.) Reviewed.
- WE JOINED THE NAVY** (Warner-Pathé) Kenneth More back on the Navy lark, seconded this time to the American fleet with three naughty midshipmen and solving a revolutionary quarrel in a Latin republic. Strip-tease on board thrown in. (Lloyd Nolan, Mischa Auer, Joan O'Brien; director, Wendy Toye. Eastman Colour, CinemaScope.)
- \*\*\***WEST SIDE STORY** (United Artists) Strikingly mounted version of the Broadway musical which fails to bridge the gap between realistic backgrounds and Hollywood social rage, between dramatic dancing and tired echoes of Romeo and Juliet, between—in fact—theme and form. Fine playing by George Chakiris, Richard Beymer and Rita Moreno. (Natalie Wood, Russ Tamblyn; directors, Robert Wise, Jerome Robbins. Technicolor, Panavision 70.)
- WONDERS OF ALADDIN** (M-G-M) An Italo/American stab at the Christmas pantomime which the London stage does badly so much better. Donald O'Connor is a crude Aladdin, and Vittorio DeSica an unlikely but genial genie. (Aldo Fabrizi; director, Henry Levin. Technicolor, CinemaScope.)
- \*\*\***ZAZIE** (Connoisseur) Louis Malle's version of the Raymond Queneau book about a 10-year-old's adventures in darkest Paris. All kinds of cinema trickery, some funny, some clever, some merely look no hands. (Philippe Noiret, Catherine Demongeot, Vittorio Capriolo. Eastman Colour.) Reviewed.



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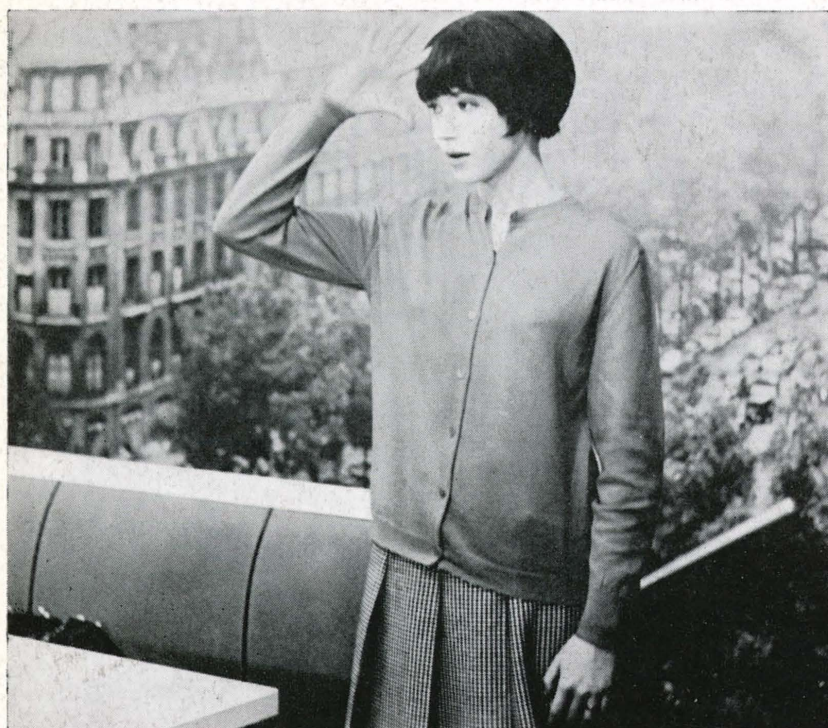
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